

IN THESE TIMES



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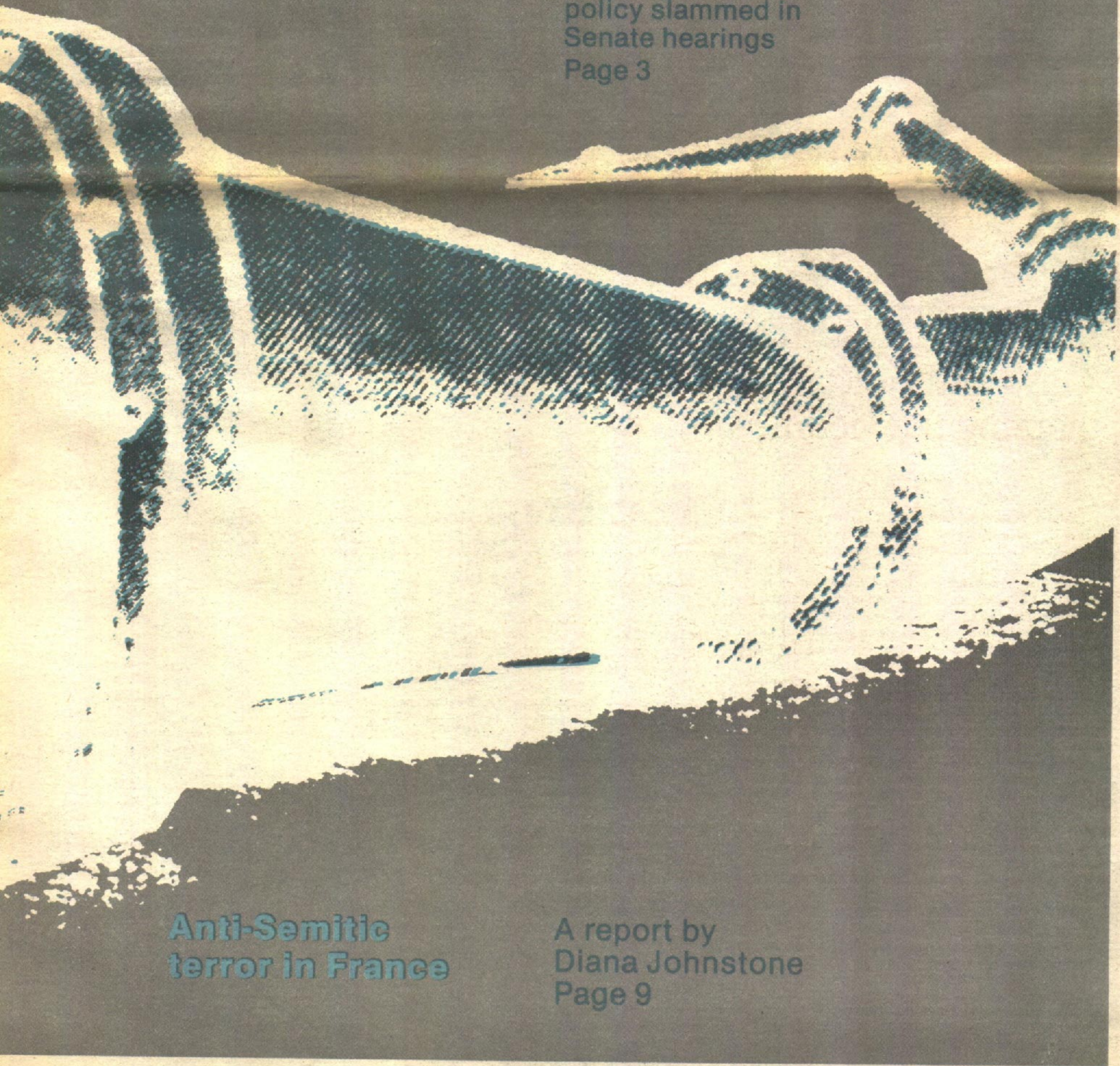
AUGUST 25-SEPTEMBER 7, 1982

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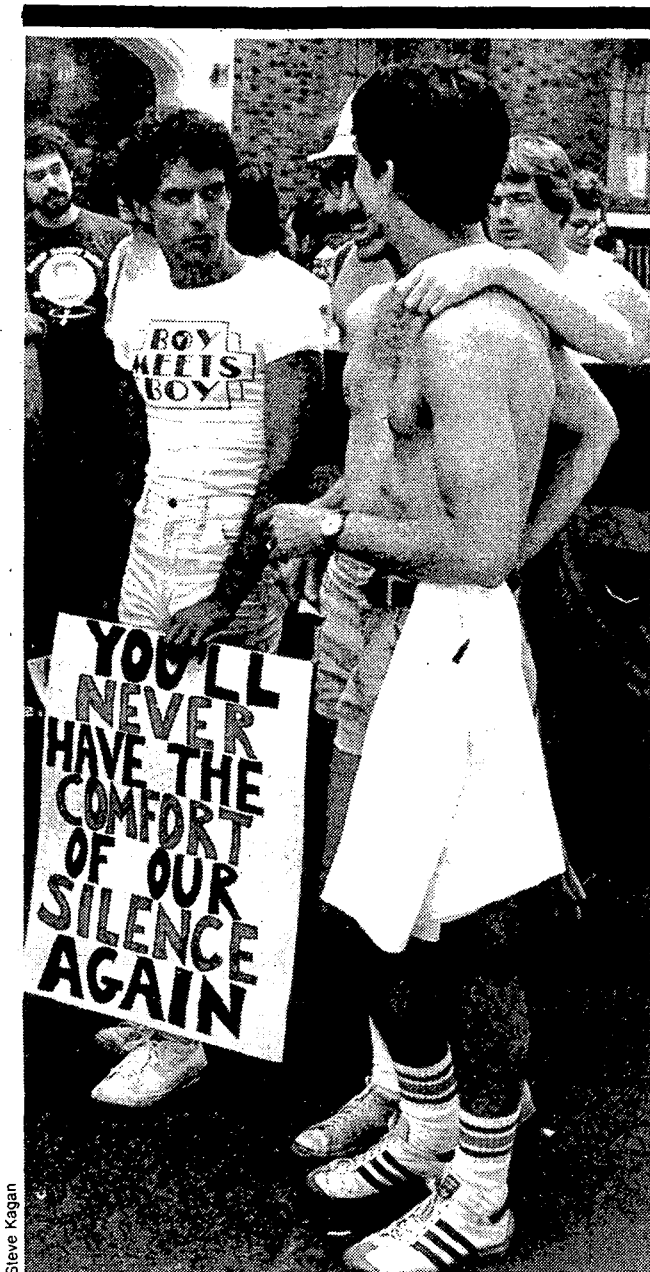
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THE INSIDE STORY



Steve Kagan

Gays and cancer—blaming the victim?

By Gideon Bosker

Punitive notions of disease have a long history. As writer Susan Sontag points out in her book *Illness as Metaphor*, "The concept of disease is never innocent... the melodramatics of the disease metaphor in modern political discourse assume a punitive notion: of the disease not as punishment but as a sign of evil, something to be punished." As many people will testify, certain illnesses are tied to the notions of moral pollution or spiritual decay, a prejudicial framework that unfairly stigmatizes people who have socially undesirable diseases.

The latest of these is Kaposi's sarcoma, a potentially lethal condition that has assumed epidemic proportions in large homosexual communities throughout the country. "Frankly, there is a lot of paranoia around this town about Kaposi's sarcoma," commented a gay San Francisco cancer specialist who requested anonymity. "Not only paranoia," he continued, "but serious concern that this lethal disease will somehow be used against us, against our lifestyle and sexual preferences. It's the perfect setup for an 'illness as metaphor' assault on gay culture, and if the Moral Majority or anyone else who doesn't like us can convince people that gays are spreading a deadly disease, we're going to have our backs up against the wall."

To date, Kaposi's sarcoma—a rare cancer endemic to equatorial Africa, but also found occasionally in this country in elderly men of Jewish and Italian descent—has already killed more people in the U.S. than Legionnaire's disease and toxic shock syndrome combined. First appearing a few years ago in young gay males in California and New York, cases of this unusual cancer are being reported regularly. At the end of July, the death toll had already reached 162.

Yet despite the magnitude of the problem and the important new information made available in recent interviews and in reports from the medical literature, critical questions remain unanswered about the Kaposi sarcoma epidemic. Paramount among these questions are those relating to the epidemiologic aspects of the syndrome: Why homosexual men and why occurrence and recognition only as recently as 1979? It now seems certain that this syndrome is truly a new disease—and thus a new phenomenon—in the journals of medicine. Thus it appears that some recent changes have occurred in the male homosexual population that have been expressing themselves only over the past two to three years. Thus, medical scientists are raising the following questions: Is there a new mutant virus or other infectious agent that has expressed itself first in the male homosexual community because of the unusual exposure potential within this group? Is this an immunosuppressed state due to chronic exposure to a recognized virus or viruses? Or is this illness due to, among other things, ill effects caused by infectious agents, recreational drugs (amyl-nitrate—"poppers"), medications (Flagyl) administered for diseases that are peculiar to this population such as the gay bowel syndrome? Or is this illness due to a combination of some, or all, of these factors?

One study conducted at New York University by Dr. Friedman-Kien—a New York-based dermatologist credited with diagnosing the first gay-related Kaposi case—and his colleagues suggests that the disease may be caused by genetic factors. The report showed a significant increase in the frequency of genetically determined cell markers called HLA antigens in patients afflicted with Kaposi's sarcoma. Commenting on the Friedman-Kien report, Anthony S. Fauci, an M.D. at the National Institute of Health, said, "It is highly likely as more cases are reported and carefully studied that a wider spectrum of associated diseases will become apparent."

Despite increasing concern about a phenomenon that witnesses at a recent hearing of the House subcommittee on health and the environment described as "the tip of the iceberg," gay spokesmen and legislators have been critical of what they perceive as a sluggish federal response. And American Public Health Association (APHA) President Stanley J. Matek also recently charged that "...with no capacity to deal with new problems, [the Center for Disease Control] is robbing Peter to pay Paul.... Peter is currently the money for venereal disease and other vital public-health problems. The APHA believes that Peter should be the Defense Department."

Gay health advocates argue that as a result of the shrinking economy and Reagan-backed initiatives that have virtually crippled important public health agencies, this life-threatening disease primarily affecting homosexual males is not getting adequate attention. The Center for Disease Control has spent only \$950,000 investigating the syndrome, compared with \$9 million for Legionnaire's disease and \$1.25 million for toxic-shock syndrome, despite Kaposi's sarcoma's formidable mortality rate that approaches 40 percent and a bona fide epidemic of over 320 cases from 20 states.

And Rep. Henry A. Waxman (D-Cal.), chairman of the House subcommittee on health and the environment, was recently quoted in a *Medical World News* article as saying, "There is no doubt in my mind that if the disease had appeared among Americans of Norwegian descent or among tennis players, rather than gay men, the response of the government and medical community would be different."

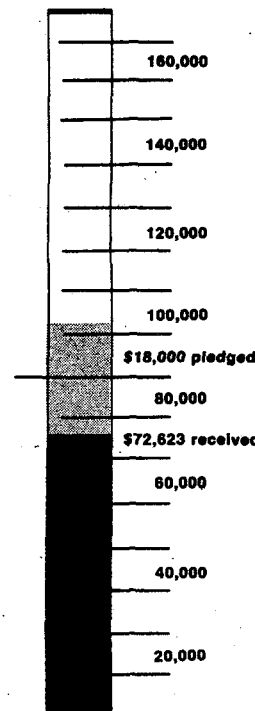
"I want to be especially blunt about the political aspect of Kaposi's sarcoma," Waxman added. "This horrible disease afflicts members of one of the nation's most stigmatized and discriminated against minorities. The victims are not typical mainstream Americans. They are gays mainly from New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco. Legionnaire's disease hit a group of predominantly white heterosexual middle-aged members of the American Legion. The respectability of the victims brought them a degree of attention and funding for research and treatment far greater than that which has been made available so far to the victim's of Kaposi's sarcoma. I want to emphasize the contrast between the 'more popular' Legionnaire's disease—which affected fewer people and proved less likely to be fatal—and Kaposi's sarcoma. What society judged was not the severity of the disease but the social acceptability of the individuals afflicted with it."

But recent diagnoses have shown the disease present in heterosexuals as well. At least 80 heterosexual men and women, all abusers of intravenous drugs, have developed the syndrome. The National Health Institute reported three cases of Kaposi's sarcoma in heterosexual hemophiliacs and many Haitian refugees have been afflicted as well.

These findings may encourage the federal government to take a more serious look at the disease. Yet the spread of the disease to the heterosexual community could also create an even greater and more fierce anti-gay backlash with homosexuals being blamed for the illness in others. According to Friedman-Kien, his patients are asking: "Why are we being punished? Why are we being singled out?" And just as important, "How is the Moral Majority going to use this?"

Gideon Bosker is an M.D. who writes regularly about medical issues for several West Coast publications.

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To date, 1,807 readers have contributed and the money is still coming in, though we have not yet reached the number of contributors of past fund appeals (2,200).

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Trade sanctions called self-defeating

By John B. Judis

WASHINGTON, D.C.

"I FEEL WE ARE NOT AT ALL IMPRESSING the Soviet Union by kicking ourselves and our allies in the shins," Senator Charles Percy (D-Ill.), the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, declared at the opening of August 12-13 committee hearings on the Reagan administration's attempt to block the \$11 billion Soviet-West European Yamal natural gas pipeline.

The committee's hearings revealed the depth of opposition to the administration's policy within the foreign policy elite. Panelists ranging from former Reagan administration Undersecretary of State for Economic Affairs Myer Rashish to his counterpart in the Carter administration, Richard Cooper, concurred that the administration's pipeline decision was, in Rashish's tactfully chosen phrase, "not a wise one."

The hearings also revealed the lack of support for the administration's undeclared "economic war" against the Soviet Union, which is intended to force the Soviet Union to reduce its military expenditures by cutting off the credits needed for economic expansion. There was widespread agreement among committee witnesses that the administration's strategy was based on what Brookings Institution

Soviet economy, told the committee. Levine argued that even if Western European firms heeded the American sanctions, the Soviet Union would be able to find alternative suppliers. Committee member Paul Tsongas (D-Mass.) hinted that the CIA had expressed the same opinion in a classified briefing of the committee.

Levine also contended that the Soviet Union was not dependent upon Western trade—and machinery imports in particular—for its survival. According to Levine's figures, which were computed on the Wharton Econometric model, the West as a whole only supplied 3 percent of Soviet machinery imports in 1980 and the U.S. less than 1 percent.

Hewitt noted that when the administration estimated Soviet military capabilities, it followed the accepted practice of "fully appreciating, if not over-appreciating, the capabilities of its adversary...yet when this same administration argues for economic warfare, it persists in underestimating its adversary."

But the most scathing criticisms were reserved for the political strategy that the administration's economic assumptions are supposed to sustain. The witnesses agreed that even if one supposed that the sanctions would hurt the Soviet Union, they would still not change Soviet behavior in the ways desired by the administration.

"Embargoes among nations are notoriously ineffective," former Carter official Cooper argued. "The embargo mobilizes national sentiment and quiets the internal opposition by providing an external adversary and scapegoat, especially when the embargo hurts. This pattern was seen in China after 1950, in Cuba after 1961 and in Rhodesia after 1965."

Hewitt reiterated this point when rejecting the administration's argument that a successful embargo could cause the Soviet Union to neglect its military spending in favor of consumer spending. "U.S. administration policies give Soviet leaders ample ammunition to sell the Soviet population an economic policy that pursues high growth rates for the military and low consumption growth rates as a patriotic response to an external threat," he said.

Kempton Jenkins, a former official at the American embassy in Moscow and a State Department appointee during the Nixon, Ford and Carter administrations, who is now a vice-president of ARMCO, a multinational that does business with the Soviet Union, took this argument further, saying that the American measures would strengthen the hand of the most intransigent elements of the Soviet leadership.

"The champions of autarky, those who foster traditional Russian hostility to foreign influences and the Stalinists who favor control for control's sake, are reinforced," Jenkins said. "The modernists, the pragmatic managers in the economic

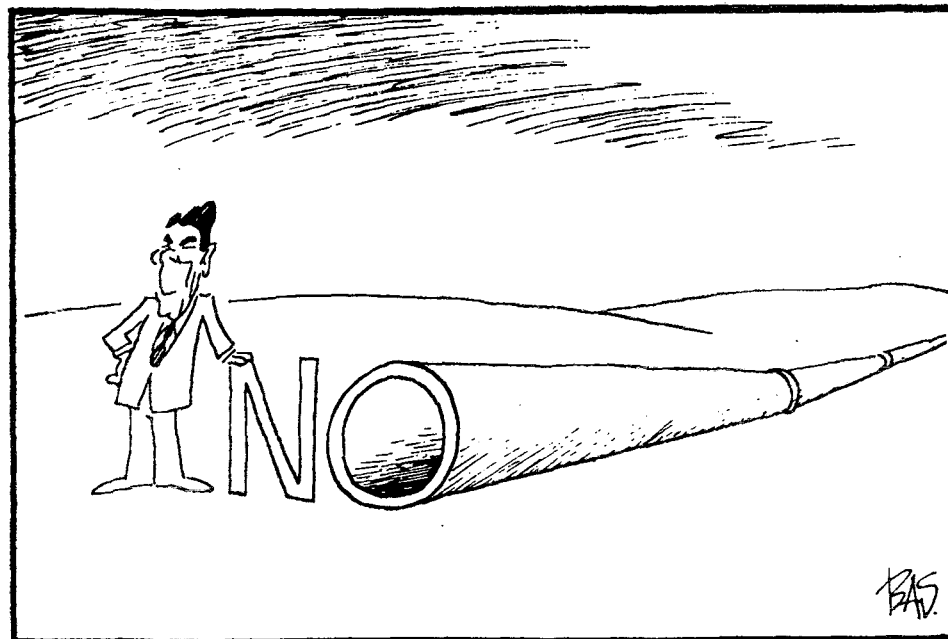
system who seek to make things work, to produce, to deliver, are set back."

The witnesses agreed that the pipeline decision had created a considerable crisis within the Western alliance, made evident by the British, French, West German and Italian decisions to defy the embargo. Jenkins said that it distressed him that "one of the historic foreign policy objectives of the Soviet Union, that is, to erode and splinter the Western alliance, has been advanced by our own arbitrary action."

Rashish, who was the most guarded in his criticisms of the administration, nevertheless didn't hide his concerns about American relations with Europe. "The U.S. cannot pursue an effective policy without an agreed policy in the alliance,

Trowbridge and Jenkins described how firms can establish a monopoly on certain high technology products because of the immense startup costs. "If we withhold our monopoly on a product, we create an incentive for competition," Jenkins said. Jenkins recalled how a French firm was able to destroy ARMCO's monopoly of submersible pumps after the Carter administration had blocked their export to the Soviet Union.

The hearings had their headier moments. When Vladimir Tremel, a Duke University expert on Soviet trade, revealed that the U.S. had a near monopoly on hops, Sen. John Glenn (D-Ohio) suggested, "We'll really cut the Russians off—we'll cut off their beer." This prompted Sen. Tsongas to warn that "if we contin-



and no such agreement exists," he said. "It simply won't do to talk about family quarrels."

Rashish singled out for criticism foreign policy officials who believed that the U.S. could "go it alone." He charged their policies were based on "nostalgia" and were "self-defeating."

The witnesses also agreed that in the context of the sanctions, the one-year extension of the American-Soviet grain trade had only made matters worse. Cooper described as a "mercantilist fallacy" the administration's argument that the pipeline benefitted the Soviet Union far more than grain sales because the former was based on credit and the latter on hard cash.

Several business leaders besides Jenkins spoke at the hearings on the pipeline decision's effect on American machinery and high-technology exports. The common note sounded by Jenkins, National Association of Manufacturers president Alexander Trowbridge and Ingersoll-Rand vice-president Thadeus Dukes was, in Trowbridge's words, "the harm being done to the credibility of U.S. manufacturers as suppliers and business partners."

ue talking about hops, we'll give Doonesbury enough material for a month."

There were the usual ironies that characterize most American analyses of the Soviet economy. While nearly all the panelists shared the Reagan administration's view that the Soviet economy is mired in stagnation, none noted that the current estimates for Soviet growth in the early '80s exceed the figures for the American economy during the same period.

At the hearing's conclusion, Tsongas announced that he would introduce the same resolution in the Senate opposing the pipeline sanctions that had earlier passed the House Foreign Affairs Committee and is headed for a vote by the full House. Even if the measure passes the House and Senate, Reagan will not be bound by it, since current export law gives him the last word. But it will be embarrassing for the administration to face the united opposition of both Congress and America's Western allies.

The pipeline decision shows all the signs of doing for the administration's foreign policy what its tax and budget cuts did for its economic policy: dividing the administration's erstwhile supporters and uniting all its political opponents. ■

Administration proposals to sabotage the Soviet economy are based on a caricature image of Russia, said one expert.

Sovietologist Edward A. Hewitt called a "caricature of the Soviet economic system." And they said the administration's measures would make it easier for the Soviet Union to sacrifice consumer expenditures for the sake of military expansion.

The Reagan administration first announced pipeline sanctions on December 29 to protest the imposition of martial law in Poland. The initial sanctions covered the use of American-made equipment in the pipeline. On June 18, the Reagan administration extended the martial law-linked sanctions to cover equipment made by European subsidiaries of American firms or by European firms using American-licensed components.

But as Richard Cooper noted, "It is well known that important voices within the administration were calling for a substantial tightening on trade with the Soviet Union before martial law was declared, and even singled out the pipeline." The administration's broader motives include both preventing what administration officials expect to be Western European dependence on Soviet natural gas and weakening the Soviet economy, which in the administration's view, would gain much-needed foreign currency from the pipeline.

The panelists at the Committee hearing questioned every facet of the pipeline decision and the underlying administration strategy. None of the panelists even contended that the administration sanctions could stop the pipeline.

"The possibility of stopping the pipeline is non-existent," Herbert Levine, a University of Pennsylvania expert on the

The China cards

The most important strategic decision by an American administration in the last 15 years was Richard Nixon's decision to open relations with China. With a single stroke, his administration replaced the Cold War diplomatic logic of good vs. evil, freedom vs. communism with a non-ideological balance of power diplomacy, based on conflicting national interests.

The Reagan administration took office reaffirming the Cold War verities, but while it has sounded the alarm, it has yet to charge.

The key is the administration's China policy, which has bounced back and forth between the Mainland and Taiwan since August 1980 when candidate

Reagan dispatched George Bush to mend fences in Beijing. In the next six months, however, the administration will have to make moves on two issues that will force it more clearly to take sides.

First, the administration's August 17 joint communique with China gives just enough assurance on diminishing arms sales to Taiwan to placate Beijing, but was immediately backed away from by Reagan and his aides. While China calls the accord "just a beginning" that has not "completely cleared away" the "clouds hanging over Chinese-U.S. relations," Sen. Barry Goldwater (R-Ariz.) characterized it as a "bad agreement" that undermines Taiwan. The spirit of

the administration's stance was best caught by Sen. S.I. Hayakawa (R-Calif.), who noted that "there are enough ambiguities in the agreement so that no one should be seriously offended, no one should feel sold out." True, at this stage, but the tilt will have to go one way or the other.

Second, in June 1981, the administration announced that it was removing restrictions on high-technology exports to China. But according to *Business Week*, Defense and Commerce Department officials, led by trade expert Lawrence Brady, an architect of pipeline sanctions, are attempting to block the sale of computers because of their "potential military application." The loss of a potential \$200 million contract to equip Chinese universities with computers and train operators has American firms up in arms, and poses a threat to Chinese-American relations in general.

—John Judis

IN SHORT

Third World shopping spree

According to a recent report in London's *Daily Telegraph*, Third World countries have been so impressed by the on-target performance of U.S. weapons in the Israel-Lebanon war that they are looking into upgrading their predominately Soviet-made armaments with U.S. ones. Word has it that Peru and Algeria have expressed interest. And Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on her recent visit to the U.S. reportedly raised the possibility with the Reagan administration and also approached the Bowen McLaughlin York Co. about buying \$900 million worth of ammunition. Even Iraq—apparently disenchanted with the performance of its T-72 Soviet-made tanks—has drawn up a shopping list for the Pentagon.

It looks like the Soviets were on the mark when they said that "Lebanon is being made to serve as a proving ground" for U.S. weaponry. Yet they stopped short of commenting on what may soon prove to be one of the most ingenious marketing campaigns in recent memory.

What black middle class?

Having already alienated the vast majority of the black population, the Reagan administration appears on the verge of striking another blow—the elimination of the black middle class. According to a recent study conducted by the National Urban League, "The extremely conservative political climate and the record-breaking recession" seriously threaten "the survival of an emerging, still fragile, black middle class." James D. McGhee, research director of the League, noted that in the public sector—"traditionally the employer of last resort to the black middle class"—minorities have lost their jobs at a 50 percent greater rate than whites. Out-of-work black middle-class families have few places to go but back to the ghetto, while at the same time, those already living in poverty are being denied entry into "the traditional avenues of access to middle-income status," he said. Could it be that when President Reagan talks about rescuing the nuclear family and preserving American values, he's referring to white families only?

Trickle-down union recruiting

At the same time administration economic policies are whittling away at the black middle class, they are fueling the fire for organizing efforts by the Industrial Woodworkers of America (IWA). According to Charles Campbell, president of IWA Region 5, "Membership average in operations in right-to-work states is now over 90 percent. We've signed up 150 new members in local 5-114 in Silsbee, Texas, we have 100 more members now in local 5-293 in Vicksburg, Miss.," and in Virginia and Maryland, membership is approaching the 100 percent mark. "It's awful hard to find a non-member around there and the same is true in parts of the Carolinas. They've finally found out that the union is the only thing between them and the unemployment line."

The road to nowhere

Searching for the American Dream where the sun shines brightly, where money and rewards trickle down from the White House in the sky like early morning dew, Antonio and Kay Garza left their Ohio home for San Antonio, Texas, only to find their dream shattered in a deserted wasteland.

"We came to San Antonio to work, not to die," wrote Garza in a suicide note. "But Reagan economics has nothing trickling down to us. I have gone as far as I can go with our lives. My wife, Kay, and I are hardworking people that have been reduced to beggars almost."

Police found the couple dead in their car with a suicide note, bankruptcy papers, a rifle and an empty wallet, according to the *New York Times*.

Hair today, lunch tomorrow

"Hair is a renewable natural resource that all too often goes to waste. As a protein, hair is rich in valuable amino acids. Additionally, hair is regularly discarded and as such is very inexpensive." So wrote Michael F. Jacobson, executive director of the Center for Science in the Public Interest, in a recent letter to Agriculture Secretary John Block. In it, he suggested tongue-in-cheek that since the department now permits ground bone to go into meat, it should also consider allowing a nutritious ingredient like hair into hot dogs and bologna. "The Department of Agriculture (USDA) could increase the nutritional value of foods...expand the food supply, alleviate hunger and reduce food prices."

Realizing that American eaters are a squeamish lot and may balk at a label that says "Frankfurters—contains hair," Jacobson went on to suggest that this potential problem could be solved by a label that said explicitly, "Product contains clean hair." Buyers beware: Rumor has it that the USDA doesn't have a sense of humor these days.

—Nina Berman

"Bad Citizen Award" goes to Chicago bank



The Reclaim Chicago coalition targetted Continental Bank.

CHICAGO—For the second time this summer, Continental Illinois National Bank & Trust Co., one of this city's largest banks, received a public slap in the face.

The first hit came in July following disclosures that Continental had lost \$61 million in the second quarter primarily due to more than \$1 billion in loans made by Continental to energy speculating firms through Oklahoma's Penn Square Bank. Unfortunately for Continental, federal regulators shut down Penn Square on July 5.

The latest insult came on August 12 when Reclaim Chicago, a coalition of more than 40 community, tenants rights and labor groups, held a press conference to present Continental with Chicago's "Bad Citizen Award" for the bank's \$1.3 billion in non-performing loans and for Continental's overall non-performance on jobs, energy and housing in Chicago. Instead of investing in the city to rebuild decaying neighborhoods and create needed jobs, Continental "went on a binge in the Sun Belt," charged Gail Cincotta, president of National Public Action, one of the dominant organizations in the Reclaim coalition.

And Tom McLaughlin, another member of Reclaim Chicago, said that Continental Bank, which touts slogans like "Because we live here" and "We'll find a way," does not in fact have the interest of Chicagoans at heart. The bank has chosen to use its capital and power to speculate on risky ventures rather than investing in the rebuilding of our neighborhoods.

During 1981 Continental provided only 22.7 percent of its housing loans to the city of Chicago, with the rest going to the suburbs and beyond. And even though Continental increased its overall lending by 39 percent from 1979 to 1981, the bank decreased its home lending in Chicago from \$158 million in 1979 to only \$10.5 million in 1981.

Describing the aims of the two-year-old coalition, Vera Benedek of Reclaim Chicago said, "We work to define the issues in the city. We want people to recognize that the corporations are the problem and as an organizing force we will put the corporations on notice that they will have to deal with us."

The Coalition is now gearing up for Reclaim America week to be held September 6-14. Following rallies in several smaller cities

across the country, the first joint Reclaim America Action will commence in Chicago on September 10. From there it is to Cleveland, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., and finally to New York's Wall Street for a giant demonstration on September 14.

—Nina Berman



Tinkering with apartheid

JOHANNESBURG—In travels around South Africa, the visitor soon gathers the impression of a highly militarized society.

Close to 200,000 men are under arms at any given time, of whom about half are stationed in Namibia. And even though in the early '70s the South African military reversed its previous policy and started to train blacks, upward of 90 percent of the army is still white.

Prime Minister P.W. Botha now faces some worrying arithmetic. Close to one-fifth of the one million white men between 18 and 45 years old who occupy most of the skilled and managerial positions in the economy are in the army at any particular moment. Even if Botha settles in

Namibia, the continuing insurgency in South Africa, with its prospect of permanent mobilization—a weakened economy and a sapping of white morale—requires him to add blacks to the army in greater numbers.

This manpower consideration, stated explicitly by Botha on several occasions, is arguably the single most important factor behind his new constitutional proposals, which he announced with great fanfare in early August. The proposals amount to an effort to win support from 2.5 million blacks of mixed descent—the so-called "colored" people—and 800,000 Indian South Africans, without jeopardizing the paramount position of the 4.5 million whites.

The proposed system is ludicrously complex. The existing all-white Assembly will add two new separate chambers for the newly enfranchised racial groups. This unwieldy tripartite body would then select a president's council of 20 whites, 10 "coloreds" and five Indians. It would also convert itself into an electoral college once every five

years, in a ratio of 50 whites, 25 "coloreds" and 13 Indians, to select the state president.

At least in appearance, South African politics will certainly change. A few "colored" and Indian ministers will be found to serve in the cabinet, for instance, from where they will presumably supervise whites.

It is still far too early to tell how many "colored" and Indian people will be won over to the new initiative. Both communities, which once saw themselves to some extent as distinct from, or superior to, the black majority, have been moving steadily leftward in recent years, saying that they will have no part in arrangements that exclude blacks. "Colored" people discredited a previous "representative council," which was supposed to manage their affairs, forcing the regime to close it down two years ago. Late last year, the overwhelming majority of Indians

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boycotted the first elections to a similar body intended for them.

Botha's proposals do not mention the 20 million blacks at all. They—even the people who live permanently in urban areas—are supposed to continue to exercise their political rights in whichever of the 10 impoverished rural Bantustans they are assigned to. That policy, long repudiated by even conservative Western governments, has received an unexpected and surprising boost in recent months with the disclosure that Swaziland, an internationally recognized country that borders South Africa to the east, is prepared to collaborate with the regime.

In question are two ridiculously tiny, overcrowded strips of territory along the Swazi border. One is the so-called "homeland" for all ethnic Swazis who live in South Africa, while the other, a narrow corridor to the Indian Ocean, is part of the Bantustan set aside for Zulu-speaking blacks.

Pretoria is ready to cede the areas to Swaziland. Part of the deal is that 750,000 ethnic Swazis, two-thirds of whom do not live in the territories in question, will be forced to become citizens of Swaziland. This massive denationalization, which has occurred already in the first four Bantustans to be pushed to "independence," will be another step toward the regime's stated goal of stripping all blacks of South African citizenship—denying them any claim to political rights.

Reports leaked from Washington have hinted that the Reagan administration's nominee as the next ambassador to Swaziland has already endorsed the prospective land deal.

—James North

In Detroit, a steamroller

DETROIT Democratic Socialist Zolton Ferency, the relentless maverick of Michigan politics, rode his fifth gubernatorial bid long, hard and straight into the face of a steamroller August 10. Placing fourth in a field of seven, his campaign captured 86,000 ballots statewide on an uncompromising platform calling for the creation of a state bank, public ownership of major utilities, a massive economic development program, reproductive rights and anti-Reaganism.

The victor of the Michigan Democratic primary was James Blanchard, a virtually unknown four-term Congressman from north suburban Detroit, who benefitted from a horn-again black/labor machine manufactured with a UAW label. Blanchard's victory and Ferency's defeat raise serious questions about the relationship between the DSA and the UAW, particularly in the field of electoral politics.

According to Rep. John Conyers (D-Mich.), "Zolton Ferency was clearly the logical, rational candidate to be endorsed by the labor movement. Instead, Sam Fishman (director of the UAW's Michigan Community Action Program) found his neighbor and friend Jim Blanchard." The campaign was then built from scratch, featuring well-timed and orchestrated endorsements from

the UAW, AFSCME, AFL and Michigan Education Association along with cash contributions from Ford, General Motors, Consumers Power, Detroit Edison, Bendix and Rockwell. TV ads included testimonials from such luminaries as Chrysler board chairman Lee Iacocca and an officer of Standard Federal Savings and Loan (which has brought state consumers record high interest rates).

The contest was a sharp contrast to Ferency's 1978 campaign, when neither the UAW nor Detroit's Mayor Coleman Young made any official endorsement and Ferency ended up capturing second place with 150,000 votes.

This time around, he also suffered a split in his traditional constituency. One candidate, state Senator David Plawecki, won some of the white ethnic and rank-and-file votes. Another candidate, state Senator Ed Pierce from Ann Arbor, carried that city's liberal block along with some black votes as well.

Conyers, who actively supported Ferency four years ago but whose district came "close to all but giving the stamp of approval to Blanchard," despite Blanchard's consistent opposition to Black Congressional Cau-

Socialist gubernatorial candidate Zolton Ferency



cus initiatives, said, "It wasn't what Blanchard did or didn't do, it's what Ferency didn't do—he didn't go into the black community. Ferency, who is probably the most astute political person in the state, assumed that I was going to split the black leadership, break up our fragile network of black leaders, without even a phone call."

But the most curious and perhaps most explosive development in the Ferency primary was the refusal of the large Detroit DSA local to endorse their own member's candidacy. Ferency told *In These Times*, "DSA either sensed or was told that Ferency was an anathema to the UAW." The organization's national publication *Democratic Left* did not mention Ferency's campaign in issues preceding the primary. "It was not that we made a conscious decision not to cover it...we just don't cover that many campaigns," said Maxine Phillips, managing editor of the publication.

—Ron Williams



Joe Hold

Briefing: The squat goes on

For years squatting has been a way of life for tens of thousands in London, Amsterdam and West Berlin. But now in places like St. Louis, Dallas and even Tulsa, Okla., squatters, many of them organized by Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN) are slowly making their mark in the fight for affordable housing. (See *In These Times*, July 28).

St. Louis: The squatting movement has focused on the black neighborhood of the otherwise integrated Central West End area. According to ACORN staff director Adam Blumenthal, the city wants to develop the area for "suburbanites and young professionals, as is the trend across the country." But ACORN believes that "the neighborhood should be preserved for the people who live there."

At issue are 1000 city-owned abandoned houses priced at roughly \$5,000 for individuals and \$80 to \$90 when bought in blocks by private developers. To stop block takeovers and re-gentrification of the area, ACORN began squatting people last fall. Blumenthal claims that after ACORN moved in one family the city vandalized their house, making it impossible for them to live there. While other squatters were also harassed, two managed to strike a bargain with the Land Revitalization Authority (LRA), a state agency controlling the property, whereby the squatters would purchase the house for \$3,000 on a \$65-a-month lease.

He said ACORN considered this short of what it wanted: a concrete homestead program that would allow people to acquire houses if they promised to fix them up.

According to Blumenthal, in late April the mayor assured ACORN that a homesteading program would be put in motion. But two weeks later—in a move that stunned ACORN officials—the city arrested 23-year-old Lawrence Brady, a janitor who had been working on a squat for months. Originally, the city wanted to charge him with burglary until ACORN pointed out that Brady hadn't taken anything

out of the house but was in fact putting in things—such as plumbing. Brady was then charged with suspicion of criminal trespassing.

Brady's arrest caused such a public stir—including a sit-in at the mayor's office—that the city eventually dropped the charge. To further ease the pressure, the LRA decided to turn over 12 abandoned HUD houses it had previously refused to release.

While the Brady incident succeeded in providing some individuals with homes, ACORN leaders and two squatters were slapped with a \$610,000 suit by the LRA for punitive damages. The suit also calls for a permanent injunction that would prevent ACORN from "interfering in the normal conduct" of the agency's business. Blumenthal said that the injunction "would prevent us from criticizing basically anything it [the LRA] did. The injunction is very dangerous."

He added, "The fact that they're suing us hasn't changed our battle plans at all."

Dallas: The squatting movement here has turned into a battle with the Reagan administration's Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). According to Terry Andrews of ACORN, "HUD has always been bad, but it's a lot worse now."

In 1973, HUD set up the Section 810 homesteading program, whereby the city could acquire HUD-owned buildings valued under \$15,000 and then turn them over to people willing to homestead. From 1973 to 1978, 370 houses were allocated for homesteading. That number quickly decreased and in September 1981 the program fell apart completely. The Dallas housing crunch, combined with high inflation, pushed the value of HUD houses way above the \$15,000 limit. Despite ACORN requests for HUD to renegotiate the original \$15,000 figure, the department decided to let the homesteading program die.

In June, ACORN squatted Thelma Jones in a HUD building. She was soon forced out of the building and arrested on the charge of suspicion of criminal trespassing. During the arrest,

her property was thrown out into the street and she is now suing HUD for damages.

The Jones incident and the larger question of HUD's failure to maintain the Section 810 homesteading program were discussed with the secretary of HUD at the ACORN demonstration in Washington, D.C. As a result, HUD agreed to hold a meeting on July 28 with ACORN in Dallas to review the homesteading program and to negotiate a reassessment of the \$15,000 limit. According to Andrews, nothing was accomplished at the July 28 meeting. "Basically, Dick Eudaly [the HUD regional director] told us that HUD is not interested in providing abandoned houses for homesteading. They're interested in making money. And the only way they would turn over those houses is if they find that they can't sell them quick enough. So far that hasn't happened." Andrews added, "The meeting lasted two-and-a-half minutes."

But on the local level, ACORN did score a victory when Dallas decided to establish a non-profit housing corporation, Common Ground, to purchase privately owned abandoned houses. ACORN will sit on the board of directors.

While Common Ground has already received \$565,000, it is not yet clear whether the corporation can act as a viable source for people who need housing. According to Andrews, the city has only selected nine houses for the program.

When squatters in Tulsa tried "to work within the system," said Jeff Murray of ACORN, "the mayor sold us down the river." Ignoring the recommendations of a city appointed citizens action group on housing, the mayor sold 40 abandoned houses to private developers. ACORN, along with the residents of the community, wanted the homes turned over to squatters.

As it stands now, the buildings are boarded up and the developer has 45 days to fix them. ACORN will wait for that deadline to pass before deciding their future plans. But according to Murray, the alliance forged between the squatters—many of them Cuban—and the community's black residents before the homes were sold, is just as strong if not stronger now. Residents have said that they will continue to support ACORN's efforts and that they will not tolerate another slumlord.

—Nina Berman

IN THE NATION

LABOR

By Richard Moore

NEW YORK

A GENUINE WORKING-CLASS movement has emerged in New York City's Chinatown following the most crucial labor struggle in the nation's garment manufacturing industry since the '30s.

The battle—a classic labor conflict featuring everything from wildcat strikes to lockouts to mass demonstrations—focuses on the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union's (ILGWU) efforts since March to secure a new three-year contract with Chinatown's industry's bargaining representative, the Greater Blouse, Skirt and Undergarment Association (GBSUA). During the course of negotiations, the GBSUA twice rejected ILGWU Local 23-25's proposed contract—one virtually identical to those already ratified by other northeastern apparel manufacturers—and stood firm behind 15 counter-demands that union leaders termed "intolerable."

What followed this impasse, punctuating and defining daily life in this immigrant community for months, was a wrenching and sometimes unprincipled battle for worker support and allegiance. Ultimately, the union prevailed: Over 500 garment shopowners signed individual agreements with Local 23-25 and the GBSUA is expected to ratify a general agreement soon.

From the beginning, there was surprising and unprecedented support for the ILGWU. For example, immediately following the GBSUA's initial rejection of the pact on June 10, 5,000 workers joined an ad hoc "Committee to Defend the Union Contract." Hundreds of others, most of them women, became union activists literally overnight, making phone calls, cramming Chinatown's narrow streets with leaflets and organizing their co-workers for what union leader Jay Mazur promised would be a crucial strike. On one occasion, 50 workers stormed a pro-management radio sta-



Workers rock Chinatown

tion demanding equal time for the union's position, and they got it.

Management's massive media campaign, based primarily on racial appeals for Chinese unity against the "lofan" union, failed to stop 15,000 workers—80 percent of Chinatown's garment workforce—from walking off their jobs in the early morning of June 24 to attend a union rally in Columbus Park.

The mounting threat of a crippling

strike quickly forged a substantial split among the contractors. But at this point, those who opposed an early settlement retained their dominant position within the GBSUA. For one thing, some shopowners were convinced the union would not actually strike. In addition, many other owners stood united in an ideological stand against alleged discriminatory practices by uptown manufacturers. These manufacturers, the contractors argued, would not pay for the increased costs of the new pact, as they promised nor would they guarantee Chinatown an adequate supply of work. So on July 1, this time disregarding the unanimous advice of their own negotiation committee, management again voted down the union's offer.

Rather than strike, however, the union continued its rather tepid strategy of signing individual shops to "interim" agreements. But many members quickly saw through the union's vacillation, and on July 5 employees at Daytime Sportswear, a shop of about 50 workers, staged a wildcat strike, while other, equally restive members, clamored for a union response.

The growing militancy of the rank-and-file, coupled with a four-day lockout staged by garment shopowners, convinced the union to take the offensive. On July 15, the union struck 30 shops. More than 10,000 workers, picket signs held high, marched defiantly through the streets of Chinatown declaring their willingness "to strike for a year to win ratification of the contract."

Victory came quickly for the union. Such a strong showing of support for Local 23-25 after weeks of stalled negotiations, after weeks of wavering by union leaders, indicated that the ILGWU could withstand a long strike. For the contractors, such a strike would mean bankruptcy for a significant number of businesspeople. And so the owners, who could no longer count on workers yielding to ethnic pressure, gave in. By 3 p.m. on July 15, more than 500 shops had signed the union agreement.

As the battle winds down, it is clear that Chinatown will never again be the same. For the Chinese community, an

old way of life—industrial bondage based on blood relations and loyalty—is being buried in the frenzy of Chinese workers challenging Chinese employers and, for the first time, challenging them through an American trade union structure.

The end of an alliance.

What prompted this phenomenon in a community that before had seemed so cohesive?

The emerging divisions here represent the culmination of radical changes throughout New York's garment industry, changes heralding the end of a historic alliance between New York's garment contractors, Seventh Avenue manufacturers and the ILGWU itself. Thus, Chinatown's transformation hinges on a profound point of industrial transition. On one side, a new ascending group of foreign businesspeople, exploiting the cheap labor of a dynamic immigrant community, seeks to free itself from past bargaining precedents and to test its independent strength in the garment marketplace. On the other side, an old guard fights to preserve a cozy, cooperative labor-management relationship that has stabilized the marketplace for decades.

Indeed, that relationship governed labor relations in the industry for at least the past 50 years. From the turn of the century through the dreary years of the Depression, New York's garment scene was a pageant of cut-throat competition, fierce price-cutting wars between contractors, and intense organizing battles between management and the ILGWU.

But by the end of the '30s, survival had dictated a tenuous balance of power between the parties. Contractors began cooperating in setting prices, placing floors on workbids to Seventh Avenue jobbers and manufacturers. Moreover, the ILG significantly enhanced the curb on competition by limiting workforce demands on employers and by keeping the entire industry organized. Whatever the long-term implications of union-management cooperation, the resulting labor peace, and growing wage and price stability, protected ILG wages and industry

Continued on page 10



New York in the Sixties

By Steve Schewel

DURHAM, N.C.

IN EDEN, ROANOKE RAPIDS, HILLSBOROUGH, ERWIN and Bath, as well as many more little towns throughout the Carolinas, local textile mills long dominated life. Not only would a mill be the main employer in the area, but also it often owned the workers' homes and most of the other local real estate. So workers rarely took on the mill bosses, and usually when workers left their jobs at age 50 or 60, they could not breathe well enough to keep working, do housework or even walk to the grocery store.

Most workers never made the connection between labor in the mills and their breathing problems, and the companies systematically denied such a connection. But since the founding of the Brown Lung Association (BLA) in the early '70s, all that has changed. In 10 short years, the BLA has built a powerful movement among thousands of retired textile workers in the Carolinas to clean up the region's cotton mills.

The BLA president, Phillip Smith of Monetta, S.C., a retired textile worker who keeps two oxygen tanks beside his bed, recently said, "The Brown Lung Association taught us we could win, even from our wheelchairs and carrying our breath in a tank. Since 1975, the BLA has helped workers in the Carolinas win more than \$10 million in worker's compensation from the textile companies."

That magnitude of awards provides a strong incentive for the manufacturers to clean up the mill, and the Carolinas BLA has won many other victories at the state level as well. The North Carolina legislature provided for free medical examinations for workers filing a brown lung compensation claim and extended the time limits during which retired workers could file claims. To prevent insurance companies from delaying payment of awards, the BLA won a North Carolina statute charging them interest for the time between the winning of awards and when they are paid out.

North Carolina BLA pressure also forced the creation of the Governor's Blue Ribbon Panel to speed processing of claims by the Industrial Commission. And, after BLA members won national attention in 1978 by testifying in Congress for a tough cotton dust standard (members also demonstrated at the doors of the state's major newspapers), the Carolina press began to cover the brown lung movement seriously. Last year the *Charlotte Observer* won a Pulitzer Prize for meritorious public service reporting for its coverage of the brown lung controversy.

But the Reagan administration dealt the BLA a severe blow in its first weeks in office by threatening to gut the hard-won cotton dust standard and by ending VISTA and OSHA contracts with the BLA. The organization's staff shrunk from 38 to five in a year. An official of the Catholic Church's Campaign for Human Development—a long-time BLA funding source—publicly criticized the BLA for failing to develop a strategy for financial self-sufficiency, and his comments were prominently reported throughout the Carolinas.

Yet BLA members are confident that the group will survive and even grow as long as textile workers continue to breathe cotton dust. "We won't be kicked aside," BLA president Smith told *In These Times*. "We're not going to let Reagan and the scared rabbits that call themselves Democrats stop us."

Recent organizing drives outside the traditional BLA strongholds of the Carolinas bear out Smith's words. Nine months ago BLA staffer Bill Adler left Roanoke Rapids, N.C., for Opelika, Ala., to begin organizing workers retired from the five large West Point-Pepperell plants there.

"I'll tell you how powerful Pepperell is in this area," said Adler. "The company headquarters is across the state line in Georgia, which is on Eastern Time. All of Alabama is on Central Time except for the valley here where there are five West

Point-Pepperell plants. The valley runs on Eastern Time just like company headquarters across the Georgia line."

The recent organizing in Opelika has followed the successful methods developed in the Carolinas. Adler and the retired workers conducted free brown lung screening clinics, and 212 retired and active workers came to the first two. These clinics provided more recruits as workers learned that their "Monday morning asthma" was a result of their work in the textile mills. Now the 80 Opelika chapter members pay dues of \$10 each per year.

Several members have filed for worker's compensation awards against West Point-Pepperell. Nat Wilkins, a leader of the Opelika chapter, said that there had been 10 settlements with the company so far ranging from \$1,000 to \$27,000 awards, but to date there have been no outright awards from the state's courts for brown lung disability, and none of the settlements has included ongoing medical benefits for disabled workers.

Wilkins himself left the mill in March 1978 at the age of 56, unable to work because of breathing problems. Since then he has received Social Security disability payments but no benefits from the company. He and six other retired workers from West Point-Pepperell are expecting a verdict soon in their \$6 million fraud suits filed against the company, which, they allege, knew they had brown lung disease for years without informing them or removing them from exposure

to cotton dust.

"We want the company to pay the worker's compensation for our disability," said Wilkins. "We've got to do what they did in North Carolina—win so many compensation cases that the companies are forced to clean up the mills or keep paying out."

But the situation in Alabama and the recent drastic BLA staff cuts necessitate new strategies. There are 250,000 cotton textile workers in North Carolina, but only 50,000 in Alabama—not enough to force through the major legislative changes needed in Alabama's worker compensation system. But Wilkins spoke of a new plan for the BLA: coalition with urban union members and disabled asbestos workers newly organized in Mobile as the White Lung Association.

Wilkins optimistically noted the recent heavy defeat at the polls of a proposed amendment to the Alabama constitution known as Amendment 4. It would have prohibited a worker from suing a company for any benefits for disability beyond worker's compensation payments.

Self-sufficiency.

In a recent interview, Karen Hart, the Brown Lung staffer in Danville, Va., home of Dan River Mills, talked about a new strategy for the financial self-sufficiency of the BLA, which she described as "tithing." "We've been in Virginia for two years and we've yet to win a judgment for brown lung against the company," she said. Though the Virginia In-

dustrial Commission has never ruled in favor of a worker in a brown lung case, "we are now at the state Supreme Court level and we are very hopeful of winning there since the Court has overturned 75 percent of all appeals from the Industrial Commission," she said. "And our chapter members have agreed to give at least 2 percent of their award back to the BLA to keep us organizing."

In Virginia there is also talk of a coalition. The Danville BLA chapter has 200 dues-paying members and a new BLA organizing committee in Martinsville is growing. But there are only five cotton textile mills in the state, so Hart believes the key to bettering working conditions in the Virginia mills is a broad-based occupational health movement. "Our screening clinic in Martinsville brought out 54 workers from cotton textile plants, but we also had 26 workers from other industries," she said, such as DuPont and a furniture factory.

Danville BLA activists recently returned from a weekend meeting in Marion, Va., of the newly formed "Breath of Life" organization, a coalition of brown lung, black lung and white lung victims. And BLA president Phillip Smith spoke in mid-July in Chicago at Breath of Life's first national event, a public hearing of 250 disabled cotton, coal and asbestos workers before public officials and congressional aides. Paul Siegel, executive director of the Chicago Area Black Lung Association, noted that there are White Lung chapters in California, Alabama and Maryland, Black Lung chapters in seven states and Brown Lung chapters in five states. Like the BLA members, Siegel said he sees a combined effort by these groups as essential to improving work conditions.

Len Stanley, an early BLA organizer, recently conducted a federally funded study on the mental health consequences of disability on textile workers and their families. According to her, the research confirmed "what we always knew as organizers. Disabled workers, especially men who thought they had to be the family breadwinner, blamed themselves for their disability and the mills reinforced this by claiming their own innocence. But the BLA gave these same people a new sense of purpose, getting them together with others like themselves to stand up for themselves and the still active workers."

But the organization needs staff, she said. "Even the feistiest members are retired workers with brown lung disease. They've got to have staff there even if it's just to make sure the oxygen supply is ready for members at a congressional hearing."

Karen Hart agreed. "We've got to keep a strong staff without repeating our past dependence on foundations and the government."

So Hart recently initiated a door-to-door canvass for the BLA in Greensboro, N.C., the heart of cotton mill country and the headquarters of Burlington Industries, the largest textile company of all, "and we've raised several thousand dollars in the first month."

A recent Alabama experience bears out the need for a new grassroots funding strategy. The Episcopal Church's Coalition for Human Needs (CHN), which had financed the BLA's expansion into Georgia, had approved a grant to establish a BLA office in Sylacauga, Ala., the home of Avondale Mills. But at the last minute, the Alabama Episcopal bishop, whose signature was needed to approve the grant, refused to sign.

The Brown Lung Association's successes in the Carolinas have brought it to a critical juncture. Maintaining victories won at the federal and state levels, expanding into new states from the Carolinas and building coalitions with black lung and white lung victims will require an aggressive membership and a staff supported by funds raised from members and at the grassroots. For many Southern textile workers, the failure of the BLA to sustain itself could literally cost them their lives.

Steve Schewel is a Durham-based freelance journalist.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH

Textile workers are fighting for breath



IN THE WORLD

ISRAEL

A walk on the crooked line of Labor opposition

By David Mandel

JERUSALEM, AUGUST 1

WHEN PUBLIC DEBATE about the Israeli government's aims in Lebanon began a week or two after the invasion, the verbal battles generally shaped up along anticipated lines. The doves and hawks were, for the most part, the same doves and hawks who regularly spar over the Palestinian question, the occupied territories, settlements and the prospects of various peace and war plans.

If anything, several usually dovish-leaning Israeli politicians quietly folded their banners after a brief flurry of criticism, in deference to "the winds of public opinion," as former UN ambassador Chaim Herzog put it. Abba Eban, for instance, has been unusually silent. And as the siege of Beirut continues well into its second month, many Israelis who were at first horrified by the idea of marching into the city are now more open to calls for "finishing the job."

In such an atmosphere, harsh criticism of the military campaign by freshman Labor parliamentarian Mordechai Gur was one of the few surprises in the political center. It was particularly surprising in light of Gur's previous job as chief of staff of Israel's armed forces. He held this post in 1978 when Israel last mounted a large-scale invasion of Lebanon, also aimed at clearing the northern border of the threat of terrorist attacks and shelling by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

The most paradoxical—to anyone unfamiliar with the Labor Party's tribulations in trying to mount a "loyal opposition" to policies officially justified by "security"—was Gur's request during the first days of the war for an emergency army post in which he could contribute to the military effort. (The offer was turned down because law and custom forbid such co-option of high-level politicians.)

Gur has often been accused of weaving a crooked line in his short political career, which began, for all practical purposes, in November 1977. When still chief of staff, he publicly warned on the eve of Anwar Sadat's first visit to Jerusalem that the Egyptian president might actually be planning a surprise attack. The comment caused great embarrassment to Sadat's hosts, and Israeli premier Menachem Begin still spares no opportunity to remind Gur of what now looks like a gigantic faux pas.

But Gur claims that his positions have been perfectly consistent, both in themselves and with Labor Party views on the questions at issue. Upon examination, his claim seems justified, considering that Labor contains a wide range of views, and the more debatable accusation by its critics on both sides that if kernels of consensus can be distilled from the party platform, they themselves are at best paradoxical.

The retired lieutenant-general has no trouble explaining his apparent flip-flop on the current war: "For more than a year, we had been warning the government that its policy was making war inevitable. Relatively minor incursions on

other borders were followed by massive bombing raids," and despite the cease-fire between Israel and the PLO after the largest exchange in July 1981, "bellicose statements and brinkmanship here triggered reactions on the other side."

Especially blameworthy in Gur's eyes is Defense Minister Ariel Sharon, a longtime army rival who was bypassed for the top military job when Labor ruled the country. Several times in late 1981, the now opposition deputy aroused Sharon's wrath by publicly accusing him of looking for an excuse to go to war.

Why then the initial support for "Operation Peace for Galilee"?

"There are two sides to any war," Gur explains, and in this case, "the PLO, too, adopted a policy that together with Israel's, did in fact make war inevitable."

He dismisses the army's professed surprise at discovering vast quantities of PLO arms in southern Lebanon. "We knew very well, especially about their heavy weapons. But the last year's massive build-up was nevertheless real, and while it did not constitute a direct military threat to Israel's existence, it would seriously have limited our ability to react to terror attacks across other borders or abroad."

While Gur admits that he holds the Begin government at fault for not pursuing possible political settlements to the Palestinian conflict, "which alone could solve the terror problem," he still holds

that given the situation that developed, a move to push the PLO cannons farther from the border had to be supported.

"I oppose in principle a war that is fought for any reason but legitimate self-defense," Gur says, "and it very quickly became clear that Begin and Sharon had concrete political goals in Lebanon. Therefore, as soon as the first cease-fire was declared, we went public in opposition."

Agreement with Syria.

Gur suggests that an unwritten arrangement could have been concluded with Syria to prevent PLO attacks from the border region of Lebanon, and recalls a similar missed opportunity during the 1978 invasion: "Syria's military presence in Lebanon is an established fact—it entered by invitation of the government. Its absence from the south is only because of Israel's vociferous refusal to accept that. But if our real interest is to stabilize the situation and prevent terror attacks, why not let the Syrians take that responsibility? They have scrupulously observed the 1974 disengagement agreement in the Golan Heights, and do not allow the PLO to operate there, since they have too much to lose."

"In 1978," he continues, "I advised Begin to resist the establishment of a UN force and instead to seek such an understanding with Damascus. It did not happen, to a large extent because of American pressure. But this time, Reagan, unlike Carter back then, did not interfere with our operation or quickly turn to the UN. Our declared goal was a 40-kilometer buffer zone; in the Eastern sector, the Syrian army was sitting well within that range, and I believe that after we advanced in the west such an arrangement could have been achieved. Another link of interdependence might have been established with an important neighbor."

"We met with Begin during the first days of the war and advised such a course. He even proposed the idea in his June 9 Parliament speech, before Syria's involvement was certain. But hours

Mordechai Gur has publicly accused Sharon of provocation.



Defense Minister Ariel Sharon (above) is a long-time rival of Labor parliamentarian Mordechai Gur.

later, our jets were attacking the Syrian's positions and anti-aircraft missile batteries, which it turned out constituted no threat to us at all."

Gur distinguishes between two aspects of the Palestinian national movement—the military-terror side of the PLO, "which must be fought by all military means at our disposal," and the political side, "which demands a political solution." He endorses Labor's offer to negotiate "with any Palestinians who recognize Israel and renounce terror," but unlike many others who view the formulation mostly as a public relations slogan to justify their refusal to deal with the PLO, Gur really means it. Last September, he raised a storm in the party by specifically offering to talk with Yasir Arafat...if the conditions were met. "We and the Palestinians were born to live together in the same territory," Gur said at the time.

When asked about recent indications that the PLO might be willing to recognize Israel, Gur dismisses Western enthusiasm at the prospect as "wishful thinking." So far, the talk of "accepting a UN resolution on the Palestinian question" sounds like "formalistic double talk, since it does not spell out willingness to abandon terror and to rescind clauses in the Palestinian National Covenant that imply that Israel must not exist." Nevertheless, he reiterates a sincere willingness to meet with Arafat, and when pressed on the formalistic-sounding nature of his own demand that the covenant be changed (moderate Palestinian spokesmen generally claim that the importance of the "outdated" document is overblown by Israelis seeking an excuse not to deal with the PLO), the general shows flexibility: The required PLO policy declaration could take other forms instead, "as long as it is authoritative, clear and explicit about recognition of Israel and the substitution from now on of political for military struggle."

But what incentive is there for the PLO to take such a step when Gur's position is a minority even among the Labor opposition, most of which comes close to the Likud in categorically refusing to recognize anything but the Palestinian movement's violent facet? And what might there be to talk about when Labor's platform also insists that there be no independent Palestinian state, and that Israel keep significant parts of the West Bank (the Jordan Valley, the Etzion Bloc and East Jerusalem)?

Gur's reply is refreshingly undogmatic; though he too opposes Palestinian independence between Jordan and Israel and attaches significant strategic importance to the aforementioned parts of the West Bank, he foresees the possibility of a process similar to what occurred with Sinai after Sadat's dramatic peace initiative.

But total withdrawal from the West Bank would "endanger Israel's existence," Gur insists in response to a question about the ultra-dovish views of another ex-general, Mattityahu Peled, who stresses that in conditions of modern warfare, the relationships prevailing across a border, and not its location, determine the country's security. A minute later, however, he admits that "ideologically, Peled is correct, though there is still a definite connection between borders and military tactics."

Clearly, Mordechai Gur is unwilling to advocate withdrawal from territories in which the Labor Party sponsored large-scale settlement. But his tone in addressing the subject puts him squarely within the highly polarized party's dovish minority, lending it a potential leader of significant personal stature.

While Labor hawks and its centrist leaders like Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Rabin are in virtual support of the government's policy, Gur sees his Party's platform as representing an "opening position," should negotiations with Syria, Jordan or the Palestinians take place.

His attitude is not merely a personal statement, but perhaps a prediction. "Let (Syrian President Hafez) Assad or the PLO come forth the way Sadat did," he suggests, "and I promise, there will be a new atmosphere in Israel."

FRANCE

By Diana Johnstone

PARIS

IT HAPPENED EARLY IN THE AFTERNOON of August 9, in a picturesque old Jewish neighborhood in the heart of Paris. Two well-dressed gunmen suddenly appeared at one end of the narrow, lively Rue des Rosiers and began firing away calmly as they proceeded up the street.

They made a short stop at Goldenberg's famous Jewish restaurant, lobbing in grenades and spraying customers and employees with submachine-gun fire. They continued in this manner to the end of the street and then vanished, in a white car driven by an accomplice according to some witnesses, on foot according to others. Behind them lay six dead, including two American tourists, and 22 wounded, some critically.

This was more than enough to revive ancestral fears in the Jewish community. By evening, the local people's cries in the streets had gone from shock to fury. They yelled at the journalists who converged on the scene as if their coverage of the war in Lebanon was responsible for stirring up anti-Semitism in France. When President Francois Mitterrand arrived, accompanied by Interior Minister Gaston Defferre, to attend a memorial service that evening in the local synagogue, his statement of horror at the anti-Semitic crime was nearly drowned out by chants of "Mitterrand assassin!"

Was this what the killers were after? Most French political commentators thought so.

The reactions of the people in the Rue des Rosiers were, predictably and understandably, highly emotional. But the crime itself was committed with cold calculation. This was not an American-style screwball crime, where some isolated nut goes berserk and kills everyone in sight. All witnesses were struck by the easy professionalism of the killers. They behaved like guns for hire.

So the question being asked all over France is "Who profits from the crime?"

In Israel, Prime Minister Menachem Begin lost no time issuing a statement. "Again the cry 'Death to the Jews' can be heard in the streets of Paris as it was during the time of the Dreyfus affair," he claimed. "I am proud to be the head of democratic Israel, but above all I am a Jew. If France does not prevent the appearance of neo-Nazi manifestations, of murder of Jews just because they are Jews, I will not hesitate as a Jew to call upon our young people living in France to actively defend the lives of Jews and their human dignity."

This semi-veiled threat to instigate illegal armed action on French territory caused almost universal outrage in France. It is simply untrue that anything like the cry "Death to the Jews" can be heard in the streets of Paris. Begin seemed to be willfully confusing an act of anonymous terrorism, in all probability guided from abroad, with the pogroms of other times and places. If "young Jews" living in France heeded a Begin call to "active defense," what would they do? Who is their adversary? The large Arab population of France?

In Paris, Begin's statement sounded like a threat to export the Middle Eastern Arab-Israeli war to France, unless France kept its nose out of Lebanon.

Begin's statement even indirectly accused Mitterrand himself and the French press for the Rue des Rosiers slaughter. "The crime committed in Paris is the result of shocking statements about 'Oradours' and the thoughtless statements of the French press about the war in Lebanon," he declared.

This was an allusion to Mitterrand's rather embarrassed answer to a Palestinian journalist's question at a Budapest press conference in July. When the French president was asked why, if he condemned the Nazi massacre of French civilians in the village of Oradour, he didn't condemn the "Oradours" committed by Israel in Lebanon, he had an-



A son of one of the victims of the Rue des Rosiers terrorism is comforted.

Gunmen's attack shocks Jews—and incites Begin

Throughout the country, people are asking, "Who really profits from the crime?"

answered, in a rather rambling manner, that of course he would always condemn all "Oradours" wherever they occurred.

The French press found nothing in the exchange worth reporting. But it caused a sensation in Israel, where Mitterrand was represented as having raised the comparison with Oradour. The Israeli cabinet sent an official protest to Paris, which the French government refused to accept.

Mitterrand's trip to Israel, his lifelong pro-Jewish sentiments and pro-Israeli policies apparently were all in vain. Israeli leaders appeared almost relieved to "discover" that Mitterrand, too, was probably anti-Semitic. And, at least in Begin's view, if someone is "anti-Semitic," he has no right to criticize anything the State of Israel may do.

The reaction in France to the Rue des Rosiers massacre was different from the reaction to the bomb explosion near a synagogue in the Rue Copernic in Paris on Oct. 3, 1980, that killed four passers-by. In both cases, there was the same shock, revulsion, universal condemnation. But after Rue Copernic, some initial suspicion was directed against the French right.

Unlike Mitterrand, President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing did not rush to the scene to show his sympathy, and his government seemed worried that enquiry might turn up eventual complicity between rightist thugs and the police. This suspicion played a role in the political downfall of Giscard.

But several important things have changed. Today the left government is above any suspicion of shielding neo-Nazi conspirators. If, in fact, the crimi-

nals had accomplices in the French police or far right, they were clearly working against the left government. Terrorism and the "strategy of tension"—in France as in other countries before—can be expected to be exploited politically by the right to call for a "strong government" that puts "law and order" ahead of concern for rights and liberties.

Also, the only substantial clues retained in the Rue Copernic bombing have pointed to the Middle East, not to French neo-Nazi or anti-Semitic extremists. At the time, an anonymous telephone caller had claimed the attack was the work of a tiny neo-Nazi group called FANE (Federation d'Action Nationaliste et Européenne). But the anonymous caller turned out to be Jean-Yves Pelay, a half-Jewish French Foreign Legion Veteran who revealed that he had infiltrated FANE a few months earlier at the request of a Jewish civic organization. Pelay was quickly promoted to be head of FANE's guards, a position he skillfully used to get the organization into so much trouble it was soon banned by the government. He told interviewers in November 1980 that he had found FANE to be a bunch of incompetent dingbats, who had nothing to do with Rue Copernic, although some of the members had been involved in unrelated attacks on Arabs and leftist bookstores.

A break in solidarity.

Meanwhile, the war in Lebanon has unquestionably been changing attitudes. In France as in the U.S., the invasion of Lebanon has broken the solidarity of Jews with Israel.

The break is anything but neat. Actually, it is a sort of shattering—a desolate fragmentation.

The Rue des Rosiers only makes the divisions in the diaspora more sharp and painful. After Rue Copernic, there were mass demonstrations of condemnation bringing together the whole spectrum of Jewish groups with left and humanitarian organizations. After Rue des Rosiers, this was not possible. But the condemnation is just as unanimous. The gap however, is unbridgeable between those whose response is to cheer for Be-

gin and Sharon, and those who, still discreetly, are assailed by the horrible suspicion that, in one way or another, Begin and Sharon themselves are partly responsible.

French journalists have reacted indignantly to accusations that their coverage of Lebanon has revived anti-Semitism. "Come into the studios and see for yourself the footage we are getting from Beirut," a TV reporter retorted to an angry group of Zionists. "The images are so terrible we censor them ourselves." French news professionals are aware that they gave play to events such as Israeli bombing of French diplomatic quarters and newsrooms in Beirut. Yet one attack nearly wiped out the entire staff of the French news agency AFP in what Paris considered well-aimed shots meant to express General Sharon's displeasure with French policy.

The danger of a new anti-Semitism is present, and this is what those Jews feel viscerally when they attack the media. The bombardment of Beirut, day after day, has been using up the benefit of the doubt according to Israel, just as it has been using up non-Jews' sense of guilt toward Jews. The process is probably irreversible. It is all the more dangerous in that, because of the guilt, people have been and indeed still are reluctant to express their criticism, which is building up a resentment that could explode one day.

Too close to home.

This resentment will not just go away, because Europe is also feeling threatened. The war in the Middle East could lead to a world conflagration in which Europe might serve as a nuclear battlefield. In self-defense, Europeans want an end to the madness in that part of the world all too close to home. Yet every time a European leader—whether the Austrian chancellor Bruno Kreisky, or now the French president—attempts to contribute to a peaceful settlement, his country is subject to tirades from Begin and, worse, mysterious terrorist attacks.

"Who profits from the crime?" In a general way, there is broad agreement that the culprits are to be found among those forces who want to prevent France from playing an independent role in the Middle East. What better way to disqualify France for a mediator role than to attach the label "anti-Semitic" to its government and people?

For the first time, some people are saying openly what they only dared think to themselves after Rue Copernic—that the Israeli secret service Mossad cannot be automatically taken off the list of suspects. The Begin government has been frantically trying to keep the French from sending a peace-keeping force into Beirut. However, assuming that warning France to stay out of Lebanon is the most plausible motive for terrorist attacks on France, Israel is not the only power that could be so motivated.

As is becoming increasingly clear even in public statements by people such as Is-

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Chinese

Continued from page 6
profits for decades.

Yet from the very beginning of this year's bargaining talks, Chinese contractors mounted a sustained attack upon the union-management alliance, the focal point for their efforts being the proposed collective bargaining agreement. While many feared that the contract would be too expensive for them to maintain acceptable profit margins, many others wanted the ILG to guarantee a continual flow of work from manufacturers into Chinatown.

Furthermore, the Chinese, a solid majority in the GBSUA, uniformly resented the organization's white leadership, a leadership notorious for its lack of service, its close ties to the trucking industry, and, most important, its rubber-stamp approval of ILG contracts. Market monopolization by the alliance, Chinese contractors argued, had worked against them too long.

But in reality, it was the breakdown of that alliance—and the Chinese contractors' attempt to exploit its breakdown—that actually sparked this year's labor unrest. Over the past two decades a dramatic increase in Third World imports and non-union domestic production seriously weakened New York's competitive balance.

From 1966 through 1981, for example, the domestic volume of production of women's and children's apparel declined by 10 percent while the domestic volume of women's and children's apparel sales more than doubled. In addition, the rise of high fashion apparel markets in Los Angeles, Atlanta and Dallas shifted a significant proportion of the remaining domestic production to the Sun Belt.

Imports, population movements, management desires for non-union labor—all of these factors contributed to renewed

competitive struggles among New York's contractors, each trying to underbid the other at labor's expense.

At the height of these new price wars, the increasing tempo of immigration into the Northeast catalyzed the proliferation of numerous garment ghettos. The rhythmic waves of Chinese and Hispanic immigrants pulsing through New York since the '60s changed not only the makeup of the workforce, but also, for



the first time since the turn of the century, the makeup of garment shopowners. Previous migrations, primarily blacks in the '40s and Puerto Ricans in the '50s, had affected ownership patterns only minimally.

But Chinese immigration was different and more economically diverse. Many immigrants were poor and ready to work at any wage and under any condition. And for the more prosperous ones, the garment industry was an ideal entry vehicle into the American economy. So through the '70s, Chinatown grew and shops flourished and workers toiled for low wages on the Lower East Side of New York—the heart of the ILG's historic district.

The addition of these small business-

people—each engaged in a rugged battle for survival—shattered an already weakened relationship among manufacturers, union and contractors. Unfamiliar with the union's role in stabilizing competition, these new shopowners quickly eroded wage scales by sponsoring the migration of extended family clans from abroad, and then by demanding long hours and low pay from them in return. And although Local 23-25 organized



Chinatown, contract enforcement in a tight cohesive community was exceedingly difficult.

This year, finding themselves a numerical majority within the GBSUA after a decade of explosive growth, the Chinese contractors united as negotiations began. Their new unity was not aimed merely at the excesses of uptown manufacturers, but at the union and workers as well: They chose not to work for the restoration of a fair and competitive balance, but attempted to gain a competitive edge by exploiting its imbalance and by striking at the core of Chinatown's labor standards. And this strategy backfired.

So in the short term, the union emerged the winner. But in the long term, its

success will be measured by the enforcement of the new contract and the representation of rank-and-file concerns within the local.

For the past few years, Jay Mazur, the local's manager, has begun reaching out to the Chinese membership through the media, and community organizations and by increasing the number of Chinese staff members. This trend must continue if the union is to reclaim its heritage as an effective voice of the rank-and-file. And a new Chinese leadership must be groomed to restore internal democracy to the ILGWU.

Otherwise, the few voices now calling for a separate Chinese union could become a crescendo in this community known for its ethnic isolation.

Richard Moore is a freelance journalist who writes regularly about the labor movement in New York.

France

Continued from page 9

raeli Labor Party leader Shimon Peres, Israel's scenario calls for partition of Lebanon. Israel will remain in the south "until the Syrians leave," and the Syrians will remain in the north "until the Israelis leave"—that is, forever.

In the middle, Bashir Gemayel's fascist Phalange will rule over a Maronite rump state. The U.S. government is clearly ready to go along with this arrangement. Only France might still try to work for a reunified, democratic Lebanon.

Therefore, it is possible that the attack in Paris was engineered by one of the secret services (The Israeli Mossad? The Syrian secret service, which may be backing the mysterious Abu Nidal assassins? Perhaps even the CIA?) that would gain from the partition of Lebanon. Yet who undoubtedly stands to gain the most is the Phalange, one of the world's foremost havens of international right-wing terrorism.

Grassroots Politics in the 1980s

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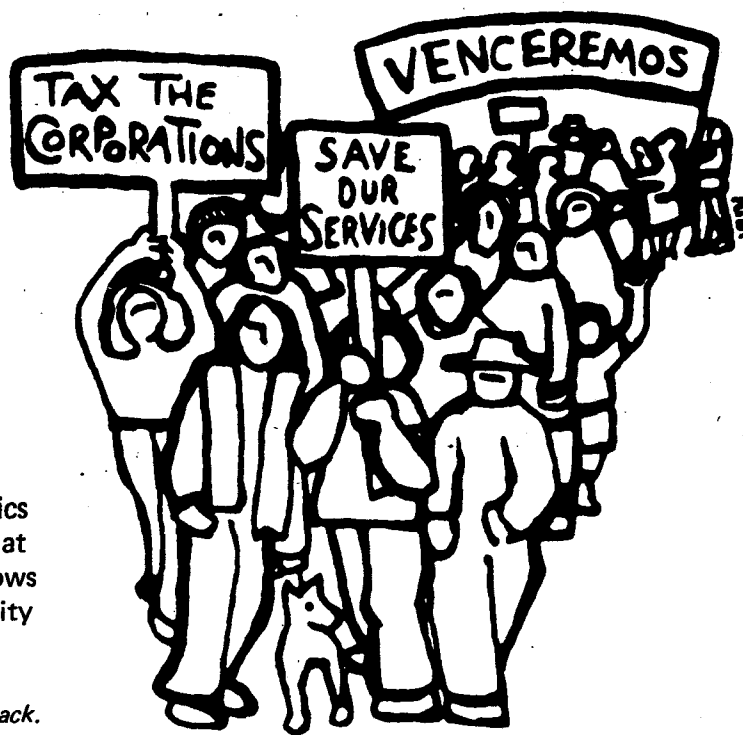
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EL SALVADOR

Unions make quiet progress

By John Dinges

SAN SALVADOR

IN EL SALVADOR'S ATMOSPHERE OF increasing polarization between left and right, one little-publicized sector of the country—the trade and peasant union movement—has made quiet progress toward unity and moderation.

Divided since 1979 over support for the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) or the U.S.-backed government it is fighting, the unions have reached some common ground since the March election victory of the extreme right parties. In recent interviews here, union leaders on both sides indicated that the unions agree on the need for an end to the country's civil war through negotiations and view the Salvadoran right and security forces as a common enemy.

Leaders on both sides stressed their commitment to pushing for a "political solution" to the Salvadoran crisis and expressed friendship rather than animosity toward fellow workers whose political positions have aligned them with the opposite side in the war. In addition, unions have become increasingly active on economic issues, organizing the first strikes in over a year and expressing increasing opposition to the government's two-year-old wage freeze and weakening of the economic reforms since the elections. The pro-government coalition, Popular Democratic Union (UPD), held the first public street march on May 1—a traditional leftist labor celebration—to protest legislation suspending the provision in the agrarian reform law granting ownership of rented land to tenants and other actions of the right-dominated Constituent Assembly.

"They will bury us if the people don't unite," said a UPD leader. He also said the "sense" inside the UPD is that members favor negotiating with the left. "You can't say that in public, though, it would be too great a risk, so there have been no official pronouncements yet."

The term political solution is a code word here for negotiations with the left guerrillas and political opposition. The right-dominated government, the Reagan administration and the Salvadoran military have rejected all overtures to seek a negotiated settlement and have declared that the only peaceful solution to the war would be the rebels' surrender. The leaders said informal conversations and contacts had already taken place with union rapprochement as an



Marcelo Montecino

The Salvadoran trade and peasant union movement has been traditionally weak in a country with heavy repression, concentrated land ownership and a relatively poorly developed industrial sector. But in the late '60s and again in the late '70s, the unions staged a series of successful national strikes and demonstrated growing strength.

In 1979, prior to the military coup that ushered in the present era of civil war, all of the major union federations were members of a coalition called the Popular Forum, which included the leftist political parties and the Christian Democrats. The Popular Forum at first supported the military government and its pledges of reform, and leftists entered the government. But as the first civilian-military

tion is that the previous center-leftist unity organization, the Popular Forum, split in January 1980 into the Revolutionary Coordinator of Masses (supporting the left) and the pro-government groups eventually uniting in the Popular Democratic Union. It is misleading, however, to portray the pro-government unions as militantly anti-FMLN or "pro-oligarchy," a leader of the CTS said in an interview. He said repression by the security forces, doing the bidding of the oligarchy, had hit all unions. Over 150 CTS members had been killed, he said, adding that most were killed by the security forces, but that some had died from left reprisals for alleged collaboration in the oligarchy's fight against the left.

"The truth is that we are not against them [the left]. We can't be against them first of all because they are workers. Their methods of struggle are different and we are opposed to that, and we are against the idea of a dictatorship of the left."

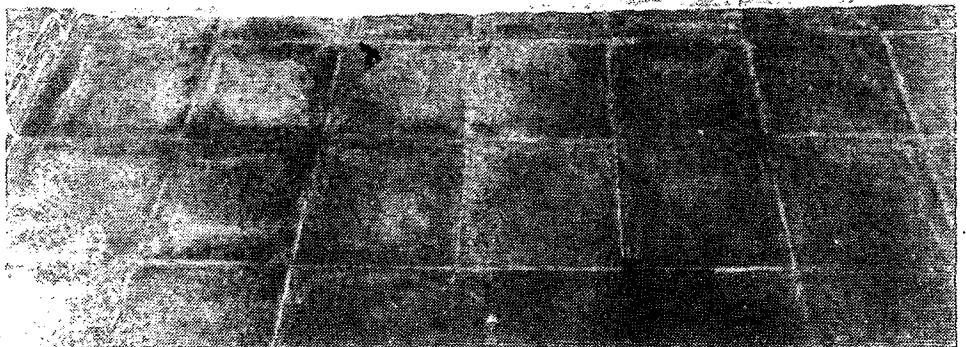
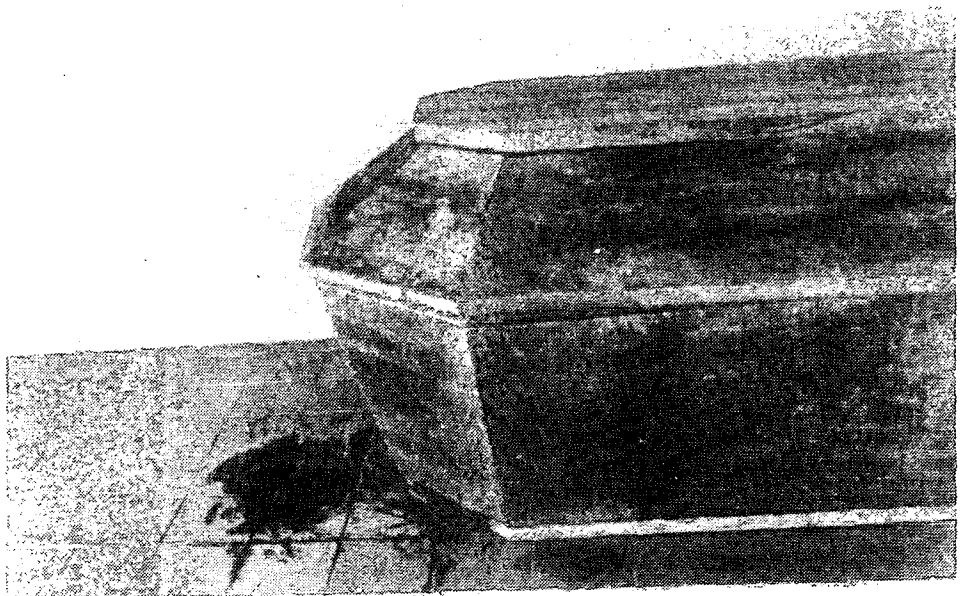
"But we don't see the left as our enemies. They took up arms because they lost faith. They became desperate," he said.

According to a clandestine publication of FENASTRAS circulated recently in El Salvador, 5,123 union members have been killed in government repression, 539 imprisoned and 1,875 "disappeared." Union leaders on both sides, early in the interviews, pulled out long lists of their union's dead and missing, and told stories of bombings and murders.

The secretary-general of FENASTRAS, Bector Bernabe Recinos, has been imprisoned without charges under the state of siege since an August 1981 general strike. At the same time, the government dissolved FENASTRAS' member union, STECEL, the electrical workers who twice threw the country into total blackout by shutting down the vast hydroelectric complex on the Lempa River.

The government has long seen the militant teachers union—with about 90 per-

A Salvadoran peasant searches for her grandchild (pictured above).



Marcelo Montecino

Union leaders stress their commitment to pushing for a "political solution" to end the Salvadoran civil war.

active goal, but no formal unity agreements have been reached. And leaders say such agreement is unlikely because it would make the hitherto pro-government unions targets of security force repression.

Although the government has officially outlawed only two of the large left-oriented unions, most left union leaders live clandestinely for fear of government-sponsored death squads and security forces, which have burned, bombed and raided dozens of union offices in the past two years.

A left union leader, representing the United Union Federation of El Salvador (FUSS), said his organization—which still has an office in downtown El Salvador—has tried to place paid advertisements in newspapers calling for a political solution to the war, but the newspapers, which practice self-censorship, refused to print the appeal.

junta fell apart in January 1980, the unions split virtually down the middle. The more militant union federations, such as the Federation of Salvadoran Workers (FENASTRAS), is a FUSS ally and was a leader of waves of strikes in 1978 and 1979. ANDES, the influential teachers' union, and several peasant unions, joined the left umbrella organization, the Revolutionary Coordinator of Masses.

The Christian Democratic Party replaced the Social Democrats in the military government and began a program of agrarian and economic reforms with the help of U.S. labor advisers, notably from the American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD), which had developed a major peasant union in El Salvador and several smaller industrial unions along anti-communist ideological lines.

As the polarization in the country increased in 1980, the U.S. claim that it

was backing a "centrist" government in El Salvador against "extremes of right and left" rested almost entirely on the reform programs, the Christian Democrats in the government and the support of the government by the AIFLD peasant union and several industrial union federations, such as the Christian Democratic-oriented Confederation of Salvadoran Workers (CTS).

In the overly complicated organizational flow charts and alphabet soup of unions, confederations and federations of the Salvadoran political scene, a useful—although oversimplified—explanation

cent of the country's primary and secondary school teachers among its members—as a major threat. In the first year of the military-Christian Democratic junta, 181 teachers were murdered and the still legal union, ANDES, has been forced underground.

A two-year-old decree of "economic normalization" was recently renewed by the Constituent Assembly, continuing a ban on any raises in wages. Although the decree also applies a freeze on prices, union leaders complain that only the wage freeze has been enforced and there

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"The fact that Reagan is a rich old man doesn't make him sympathize with his peers in age."

By Bruce Shapiro

Maggie Kuhn, national convenor of the Gray Panthers, keeps a schedule that would wear out many people a third her age. In a day-long New Haven visit two weeks ago, she gave an hour-long improvised address to a new local Panther chapter, suggested local organizing tactics, gave lengthy private interviews to the *Advocate* and Connecticut Public Radio, along with several shorter ones to other local media, toured New Haven's low-income and senior-citizen housing projects and visited with friends.

A walking manual of political details and practical solutions, until 1970 Maggie Kuhn was editor of a social progress journal published by the Presbyterian Church. But that year she turned 65 and was forced to retire. Looking, she says, for "a new purpose for living," she and a group of similarly situated friends held a meeting in New York to unite older people with the young people protesting the Vietnam war. "Our square name," she recalls, laughing, "was the Consultation of Older and Younger Adults for Social Change. But where would we have gotten with that? Nowhere." First dubbed the Wrinkled Radicals by the media ("Which we loved, but people would just laugh"), eventually they were labeled the Gray Panthers by a New York talk show host.

In its 12 years of existence, the Gray Panther organization has gathered 40,000 members in 131 chapters. It has developed an influential analysis of age segre-

gation and the ways such segregation distorts society. The group is active in Washington and is an observer and consultant to the United Nations. Maggie Kuhn outlines the organization's tactics this way: "We have used street theater, we have marched, we have demonstrated, we have picketed, and participated in coalitions with many, many kinds of groups, mostly on the broad issues of peace and social justice."

Maggie Kuhn was interviewed at Whitney Manor, a retirement home outside New Haven where she was spending the night. Also present were two members of the New Haven Gray Panthers chapter: Cynthia Savo, age 30, and Zelma Brandt, age 91.

In organizing young and old people together, what issues do you emphasize? Issues that cut across the whole age spectrum. Health is a basic right for everybody. It's fundamental. And housing is one of our two national priorities this year. And, of course, the prevailing interest has been in peace and disarmament, cutting back the military budget. People of all ages, races, and social conditions can identify with those issues.

Do you think older people bring something special or different to those issues? I would say so....Zelma and I bring an historical perspective, for one thing. Zelma, who is older than I, has more of an historical perspective than I have; I bow to hers. We can look back, and there is a certain recurrence of human situations.

When did you first become politicized? I think in college. My radicalism was fairly deep and personal, because it was a revolt against my father, an adolescent revolt. In college I was an English and sociology major. Sociology made much sense to me. I had a Marxist sociology teacher and this was great for a middle-class kid. My father was a very successful businessman, and he thought, Oh! the things I was learning! Terrible things, you know.

Have you had any heroes or role models over the years?

One of the persons I admired very much was Roger Baldwin....His perseverance and his continuance in terms of long-range civil liberties was, I think, exemplary. He was a beautiful person, and that continued all through his life. I think he was marvelous.

Another person that I loved and admired greatly was Margaret Mead. I'd met her a number of times. One of her young friends is also one of my friends and a neighbor of ours in Philadelphia, John Fryer, who teaches psychiatry at Temple Medical School. Margaret often came to visit John, and when they were together I was privileged to be invited

too. She was a great woman. And tremendously aware of what needed to be done in the future, too.

Another person whom I love and admire is one of our Gray Panthers, Cameron Hall. Cameron Parker Hall. Cameron organized the department of church and economic life for the old Federal Council of Churches, and he was one of the church representatives in San Francisco when the United Nations was organized....He now is writing a book on disarmament. He's an ordained minister, but he's been an economist as well, and a long-term political activist. He's been an observer at the UN. He's a lovely man, now in his middle 80s. He and his wife Margaret are moving...to a retirement community near Philadelphia. We have a reception planned for him. We're not going to let him just vegetate in Dorristown. We're going to connect him with two peace communities where he's just got to be involved.

One would think that an older constituency might tend to be more conservative. Have you found that?

Well, there are very great class differences in age...the difference between the people who are fairly well-to-do and have adequate incomes; and the people who are very rich and old—like the president—but are never deemed old; and then the poverty-stricken people. There are class differences, and we reflect them in our class biases.

But in the Gray Panthers we bring together men and women who have been active in the peace movement, war resisters, from the beginning; people who have been active in the labor movement, in its organizing efforts that took a great deal of courage and perseverance. You've got people from the civil rights movement, from the women's movement. So there is a base for radicalism, an historical perspective for it, and also a kind of joint strategy. We've borrowed a lot for what we do from all these movements.

Do you find any special advantages or problems in trying to organize and involve older people?

There are a number of problems. When you reach the people who have been involved in organizations and movements—or when they reach us, as they often do—then you've got easy organizing. But when you try to organize in these towers (Whitney Manor, a Hamden retirement home), for instance, you find it hard, because people have lost the ability to respond in many ways.

Just as younger people often have an incorrect image of the old, do you think older people have such an image of themselves?

They do. I believe there's abundant evidence that we fear old age in ourselves. There is a self hate: "I hate my hands," you see, "and I hate my creaky knees."

But one of the ways in which I've had marvelous success in energizing other people is to help them get hold of their past—when they were beautiful, when they were active, when they were effective by their terms and powerful—and saying, look, you can re-enact that, it can take a new turn. It may not be the same; it will not be the same. But there will be an added richness to it, because of your own sense of history.

I've said to many people that there are three things that I like about getting old. You can speak your mind...you really can. Zelma and I can both see that. And

she and I have both outlived most of our opposition. The third thing I like about getting old is that there is freedom to reach out to others. I have outlived my family, but I have loving friends, and a family that I have chosen in a sense—a movement.

What happened at the White House Conference on Aging last fall? There were many confusing reports about that. The Reagan people—brought in about 400 additional delegates who had not been part of the preparatory meetings—the state, regional, and community conferences where delegates got acquainted with the issues. The possibility of containing the conference with these delegates was what they had in mind. They appointed these delegates to be the chairs and whips of the 14 committees. The committee dealing with long-term care was packed with nursing-home operators and people friendly to the Reagan point of view. The name tags were marked so they could recognize each other and fail to recognize those who were dissenting. They fired the conference staff, and they fired the chair, and they put in their own people who had very little knowledge, and who again had not been part of any of the preparatory work.

Everything was checked through the Reagan people. The governor of Texas passed on to Reagan safe people who could be sure to hold the line on social security changes, on the whole economic picture and on health.

There was a very good coalition effort, begun just as soon as this word was out, to defeat that plan. It took a day and a half to get our strategy in place. There was a speakout session at which hundreds of people spoke their minds. And ultimately the same things that were supposed to be bottled up in those two committees popped out in others. The older women's committee centralized the focus and had in their resolutions and recommendations all the things the Reagan people opposed.

What they did in the end—which was vicious and very unfair—is that the final report was sanitized. It was purged of all the things the Reagan people did not want.

Do you find it ironic that the oldest man to be president is so insensitive to the needs of old people?

It is ironic, but then Mr. Reagan represents and epitomizes the class differences in America. The fact that he's a rich old man doesn't make him sympathetic at all with his peers in age.

We live in a dark time. It's clear. And I worry about the future for young people. But I am also hopeful, because I see a tremendous network of people who have courage and perseverance and persistence, and who are not going to go away. I think of all of us living in the bomb shelters that the British built during the blitz. The bombs are bursting all around us—programs that have human goals are being exploded and destroyed. But the bombs are going to stop and we will, through our networking now, emerge with some new kinds of programs for health and housing—that will take hold.

Is there an achievement of which you are most proud?

Well, I think the fact that the Gray Panthers have grown to the size that we are and we have successfully forged a coalition of old and young people....People said at the beginning, "Never, it's just a kind of crazy thing—what do old people and young people have in common?"

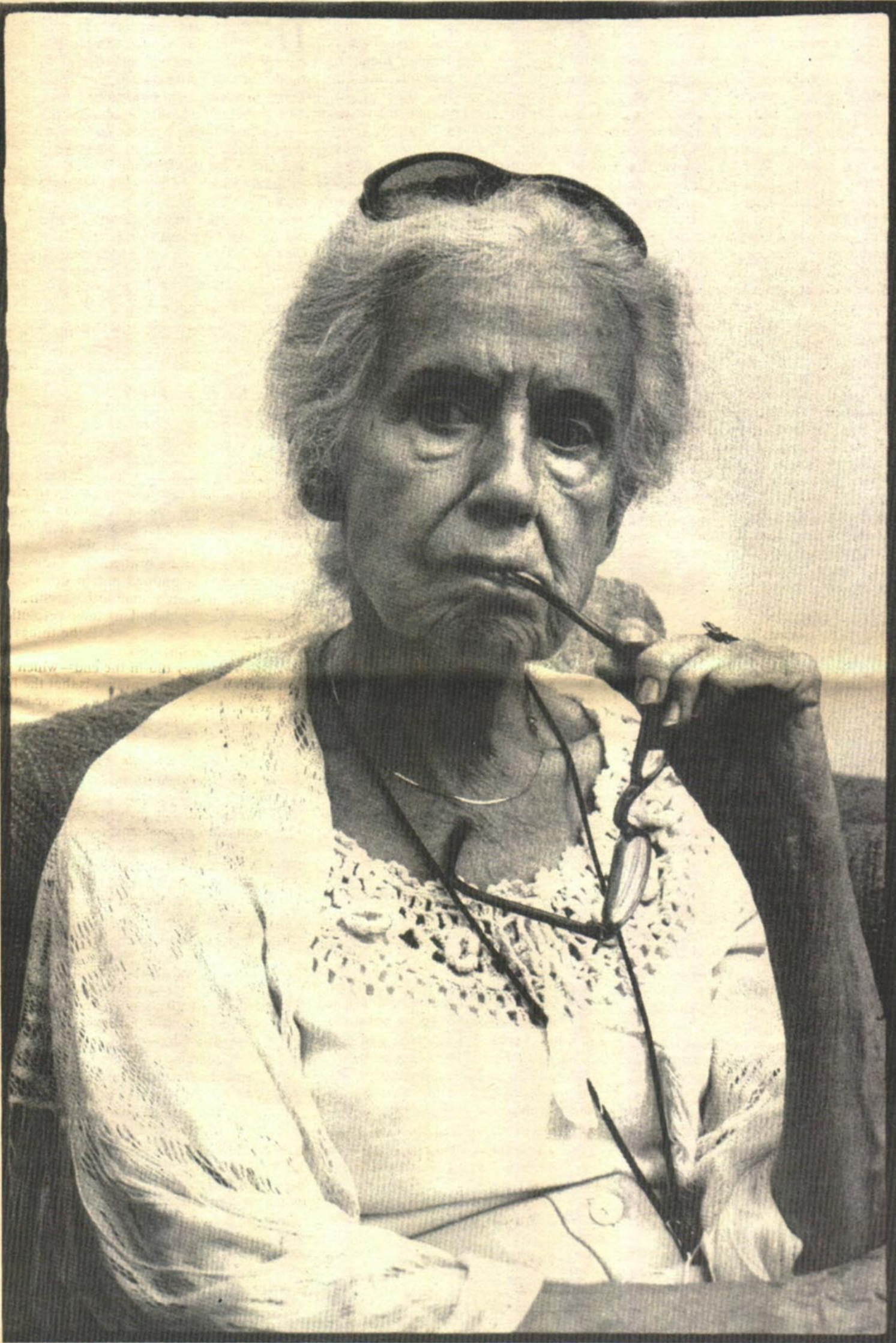
But now at long last—in the World Forum recommendation (a UN-sponsored report on aging) there is a clear undercurrent of intergenerational concern. So I think a critique of age segregation as we have developed it in this country is one of the things that I personally and others of the Gray Panthers have contributed to the social fabric. And our analysis shows that ageism, sexism, and racism and economic imperialism are all oppressive and all part of a social pathology we have to eradicate.

Bruce Shapiro is a writer at the New Haven Advocate in which a version of this article appeared.



An interview with Gray Panther

M A G G I E



Photograph by V. Blaisdell

“You
Can Speak Your Mind”

LETTERS

IN THESE TIMES is an independent newspaper committed to democratic pluralism and to helping build a popular movement for socialism in the United States. Our pages are open to a wide range of views on the left, both socialist and non-socialist. Except for editorial statements appearing on the editorial page, opinions expressed in columns and in feature or news stories are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the editors. We welcome comments and opinion pieces from our readers.

PAINFUL AND COMPLEX

MICHAEL H. PROSCH'S LETTER (ITT, June 30) leads me to make the following observations:

He says, "more to the point is the fact workers manage and control the PLO factory organizations." I ask for some examples of these worker-controlled factories. He then goes on to ask, "Except for the agricultural sector, does anything like this exist in Israel? The answer, of course, is no." That answer, unfortunately, is wrong. On a national level, Solel Boneh, Israel's largest construction company, and Eged, the national bus company (equivalent to Greyhound) are both cooperatives, owned and controlled by workers. On a regional level, in the Emek Hefer where I lived, exists for example, Granot, one of Israel's largest animal food production plants. The Granot complex also contains a regional fruit packing plant, cotton gin and computer center. Once again, the whole complex is worker controlled.

I would also remind Prosch that Israel was created and governed over the first 30 years of its existence by self-conscious socialists whose vision was of a socialist Jewish state. That Begin, for the last four years, has been desperately trying to dismantle the socialist economic infrastructure they built cannot change this. Nor can Prosch wish it away.

The issues in the Middle East are painful and complex for those who really care. To simplify the issue to socialist Palestinian good guys and imperialist Zionist bad guys does nothing to educate people or bring us closer to a solution.

—Dean Kertesz
Richmond, Calif.

CLOSED-MINDED

CANCEL MY SUBSCRIPTION. YOUR treatment of the Israeli offensive against PLO terrorism is one-sided and closed-minded.

What progressive journalism does not need is another dogmatic voice that talks only from rigid, chauvinistic positions. I don't need that kind of reportage or commentary either.

—Otto D. Well
Sun City, Ariz.

ZIONISM AND RACISM

I WOULD LIKE TO CLEAR UP A FEW MISconceptions in Jeremy Alderson's letter (ITT, July 28) on the Lebanese situation. Alderson's attack on the notion that one can be sympathetic with some of the PLO's goals without being anti-Semitic flies in the face of the very definition of the word. Webster's dictionary defines "Semite" as "a member of any of a group of peoples of southwestern Asia chiefly represented now by the Jews and Arabs, but in ancient times also by the Babylonians, Assyrians, Aramaeans, Canaanites, and Phoenicians." Who, then, is the more anti-Semitic, the Palestinians who are simply fighting for the right to return to their homes or Menachem Begin and the majority of the Israeli people who have embarked on a program of genocide against the Palestinian (and Lebanese) people?

Such a program of genocide could be termed a "pogrom," which Webster defines as "an organized massacre of helpless people" since women, children, elderly persons, and other noncombatants have been killed by the Israelis.

We must distinguish between Judaism and Zionism. Webster defines "Judaism" as "a religion" and "the whole Jewish people." "Zionism" is defined as "a theory, plan, or movement for setting up a Jewish national or religious community in Palestine." In practice, the establishment of this national or religious community in Palestine requires displacement of the Palestinians since a community is a "group of people with a common characteristic...living together." Since the Palestinians aren't too keen on being displaced, i.e., driven out of their homes of many generations, that means they must be eradicated in order to insure the homogeneity necessary to achieve a Zionist nation. Zionism, as the Israelis practice it, can, thus, be viewed as a form of racism. One can, therefore, be anti-Zionistic without being anti-Jewish. One need no more be Zionist if one is Jewish than one need be racist if one is white. One need no more support Israeli war-policy because one is Jewish than support South African apartheid if one is white.

Alderson feels that somehow the Israeli state should not bear responsibility for its actions because of past persecution of Jews. However, past persecution by the Nazis does not constitute license to persecute the Palestinians and Lebanese. It only causes neutral observers to wonder if the sacred memory of the victims of brutal Nazi genocide is being desecrated by use as a political excuse for Israeli genocide against the Palestinians and Lebanese.

—Dino Joseph Drudi
Washington, D.C.

COUNTER-REFUTATION

A RESEARCHER WISHING TO UNCOVER irrefutable evidence of declining test scores in reading skills would need look no further than the two replies to my letter dealing with the PLO (ITT, May 26).

One writer chided me for omitting the etymological derivation of "Palestine." If "Palestine" means "Land of the Philistines" or "Land of the Philatelists," what difference would it have made? The natives of the land did not name it Palestine, but the imperialistic Romans did so as to deprive the Jews of legitimate claims to the land. Nothing in my letter contradicts the technical meaning of the term "Palestine."

Another writer, Michael Prosch, says that the PLO is representative of the Palestinians because "Arafat remains the respected leader among Palestinians." Did my letter deny this? In fact, I called Arafat a moderate because he voted for the Fahd Plan; Arafat's position was defeated 13 to 2 by the PLO Executive. I demonstrated that as long as the PLO rejects the moderate, two-state course, it will not be representative of the West Bank and Gaza Palestinians.

Prosch argues that Arafat's nationalism and PLO "socialism" are reconcilable. My letter stated, "Arafat is a dyed-in-the-wood bourgeois nationalist"—not "nationalist," but "bourgeois nationalist." I trust most ITT readers know the difference. Does Pro-

sch? Perhaps not, since he writes of "worker management and control" of PLO factories. Come on! If this were so, why hasn't *Journal of Palestine Studies*, the most prestigious, accurate and complete forum for Palestinian news and views, ever mentioned this? Indeed, why hasn't *In These Times*, a newspaper always on the lookout for "worker control" experiments abroad with which to inspire American workers, ever mentioned it? The "Palestine Commune," indeed!

My citation of Israeli trade unions, elections, legal CP, etc., was designed to show how *democratic* Israel is; nowhere do I state that Israel is socialist. Of course there are grievous flaws in its democracy (but less than in the U.S.), and of course one can oppose Israel's policies (so do I!) without being anti-Semitic. I deemed Mitchell Kaidy (who prompted my first letter) bigoted because of his willful disregard for political reality and his absurd condemnation of DSA as racist, not because of his pro-PLO views.

Prosch's views are even more absurd when one sees that more Zionists in Israel have marched against the Israeli aggression into Lebanon than anti-Zionists outside of Israel. Still, I am sure Prosch is an intelligent man—now, if he would only read what I have written...

—Sheldon Ranz
New York, N.Y.

LOST HORIZON

SOMEHOW IN LAST WEEK'S ISSUE I missed your appeal for money. But when today's arrived, ITT was full of letters about people giving money. I went back to last week's rain-drenched newspaper. You are important, as a vehicle for information; as well, I'm sure, as a group of people who by your work efforts manage to get that information and analysis out to the rest of us. We're in this together.

When all the money you need has arrived, you might hire back your laid-off staff members and spend a short while sitting around listening to Tom Paxton's song, "I am changing my name to Chrysler."

Anyway, here's \$50 that I can't afford and I will tell my significant other (the ITT subscriber in the family, and in keeping with national trends, the male who has more money than I do) to include some money too.

Good luck. You can't disappear! The landscape is dismal enough without no ITT to read.

—Kathy Dervin
Cleveland, Ohio

MANDATORY READING

AFTER READING A FEW OF YOUR PAPERS I was so impressed that I'm ordering *In These Times* for our organization. Your paper is mandatory reading for those who wish to be informed and involved in this volatile world. Thanks.

—Nancy K. Przymus
Minneapolis Public Interest Research Group
Minneapolis, Minn.

ONE FOR THREE

ENCLOSED FIND \$35 FOR A ONE-YEAR subscription for the three of us plus a small donation.

We are totally behind *In These Times* as a pillar of left journalism—although we do not agree with all of your editorial positions—and urge your staff to persevere through your financial troubles.

—Ilana DeBare
—Matt Lasar
—Gary Coates
Oakland, Calif.

A BITE OUT OF THE BIG APPLE

ENCLOSED IS MY CONTRIBUTION. OUT of today's paycheck, this was to be saved for vacation. However, ITT is

more important to me, here in the "Golden Heart City" of libertarian Alaska, than a trip to New York. Besides, I belong to the elite group of "employed" and feel a responsibility to share. I hope this helps to keep the paper going long enough for me to also share my Alaska permanent dividend check with you.

—Debby Seld
Fairbanks, Alaska

RURAL INTELLIGENCE

HERE IS A SMALL BUT HEART-FELT contribution. We are deeply distressed that the money situation is so tight for the publication. *In These Times* is a vital communications tool. As members of a rural community, the weekly arrival of *In These Times* provides us with an important link to news and issues on the national and international spheres that we see in no other media.

We especially appreciate articles like the one on foreclosures on farm land (ITT, May-26) and what happened to the milk in Hawaii (ITT, July 14).

Please keep up the good work. May the money rain upon you.

—Carol Clement and Ariel Dougherty
Preston Hollow, N.Y.

OVERKILL, BUT WE LOVE IT

WE, YOUR READERS, ARE ASKING you to do something so many of us would find unthinkable—to survive on a mere shoestring. So I hope all of us are willing to help to the best of our abilities. You are our free press, after all—the one journal we turn to for clarity of purpose and reportage.

What would we do without all of you and the work you do? Our world of communication, events, ideas and hope for a future of more justice would be darkened and empty.

—Mary Forrest
Madison, Wis.

SOCIALISM'S BEST CHANCE

ENCLOSED ARE TWO NEW SUBSCRIPTIONS. I hope you get all the new ones you need to survive. I got my first real exposure to ITT in the last eight months and now find that I can't do without it.

I must emphasize my hope that you survive this crisis. Yours is the only publication that can provide a popular forum that can make socialism a legitimate alternative to the current limitations of American political expression. Socialism can become an important force for social change in this country.

—Bob Hart
Lake Oswego, Ore.

RESHAPING PRIORITIES

SAY IT AIN'T SO! YOUR "APPEAL WITH Reason" (ITT, July 14) has shaken me. I have come to depend on your voice as upon a valued friend with close and kindred views on many things. Your coverage (selection of topics: the Amtrak series was wonderful, and your scope: national/international news mix slightly skewed toward the latter) and your democratic socialist perspective have effected a tight bond between your future and mine.

I personally am part of what seems to be a large and growing group of blue-collar college graduates (I've got the typical MA in political science from Berkeley) who are inevitably frustrated with the chaos and disorder—social, political and economic—that has "put us in our place." An ordered, just, fair society—i.e., a democratic socialist one, constitutes the vision that sustains me amidst hopes dashed and dreams unrealized. By appearing in my mailbox every week, *In These Times* helps crystalize and strengthen that vision

and make its realization seem so much closer and more attainable.

Thanks, from the bottom of my heart, for the personal economic sacrifices you've made. My small contribution seems paltry alongside them, but believe me, it represents a reshuffling of priorities among such other essentials as mortgage payment, food, etc. (I did also renew my subscription a month ago.)

Anyway, don't go under, please! As the pre-eminent standard bearer for the reawakening American left, you are irreplaceable!

—Kenneth V. Leasa
Paoli, Pa.

IN THE SAME BOAT

WE, TOO, BELIEVE THAT IT IS VERY important that *In These Times* continue to exist. Unfortunately our household consists of one full-time student, a part-time employed minister and a four-year-old. Thus we are also usually in big financial trouble. Still, we will do what we can to help because we consider *ITT* an invaluable resource in the struggle to make ours a just society. This is all we can send now but we will send more when we are able.

—Orin Domenico
—Rev. Kim Christiansa
—Nicholas Domenico
Barneveld, N.Y.

BEANS AND GUTS

I NEED YOUR EFFORT. PLEASE TRY TO keep your work critical and open to ideas from all sincere viewpoints. You have lacked no courage in representing all the outrage perpetrated by the order attacking us. I have been well educated by coverage of feminist, Third World, environmentalist, labor and disarmament struggles—as well as the struggles of dissidents from misnamed socialist countries. I think however, the hardships of gays (in the U.S. as well as elsewhere) should be given more attention.

Your reportage of international news is truly unique, and Diana Johnstone's work particularly valuable. Unlike otherwise admirable publications like the *Village Voice* and *Mother Jones*, you have not exhibited temerity in using the word "socialism." That takes guts, especially if a publication also seeks independence from a particular party, as well as financial viability.

So here are a few bucks; I eat a lot of beans these days (the Reagan diet, seasoned with catsup) so it's all I can give right now, a drop in the bucket of good effort.

—Glen Clark
Fresno, Calif.

TOUGH ALL OVER

I REALLY CAN'T AFFORD THIS, BUT I really can't afford to be without your news. Farming is tough right now, with no improvement in sight. But every time I read an article about unemployed city people I feel greatly for them and the difficulties they have.

Well, keep up the good work. I certainly appreciate it. Send me a note in the fall and I'll help you out again.

—Ken Tschumper
La Crescent, Minn.

ELECTORAL COERCION

I WOULD LIKE TO ADD A FRIENDLY amendment to John Dinges' article on El Salvador's March 28 elections (*ITT*, June 30). In evaluating charges made at San Salvador's Central American University that voter turnout was little more than half what El Salvador officials claim, he concludes that if the vote total was inflated, how it was done remains a mystery.

While we still don't know what happened to the vote totals as they went through the national telecommunications center the army controls, we do know about many of the coercive means the government used to turn out the

vote. Voting was required by law, ballots were numbered and registered for each voter, and both the voters and their identity cards were stamped. These and other measures making non-participation politically risky are documented by Robert Armstrong in the March-April issue of *NACLA*.

It was amusing to read that election observer Richard Scammon still maintains that "you can't steal an election with all those people watching." As a member of the observer team sent to monitor the 1967 presidential elections in South Vietnam, he should know. He called this earlier exercise in fraud "reasonably efficient, reasonably free and reasonably honest." The other professional election observer in El Salvador, Howard Penniman, was also part of the team that rubber-stamped South Vietnam's presidential election. His book, *The American Political Process*, was translated into Vietnamese to help the Thieu-Ky regime absorb its lessons in electoral campaign procedures. Though candidates who proposed peace talks with the National Liberation Front were forbidden to run, and the runner-up put in jail, Penniman defended the fairness of the election in his book, *Elections in South Vietnam*.

The election in South Vietnam that Scammon and Penniman monitored, which like El Salvador's was held for the sole purpose of retaining U.S. congressional support, was followed three months later by the Tet Offensive. Let us hope that their presence in El Salvador will have the same effect.

—Frank Brodhead
Philadelphia, Pa.

INSTABILITY

JOHN DINGES' EXCELLENT ARTICLE on El Salvador (*ITT*, July 14) highlights the tragic civil war in that unhappy land. The fighting there must be stopped. Instead of shooting at each other, the two sides should be negotiating.

President Reagan must accept responsibility for failing to take sincere steps to include the Democratic Revolutionary Front in a provisional Salvadoran administration. A Castro-style government is undesirable, but the blood-stained regime that now rules El Salvador is nothing to brag about.

Democratic socialists, and even mildly intelligent American capitalists, realize that a negotiated settlement would not only strengthen the Christian Democrats at the expense of right-wing terrorists, but would also give democratic rebels more leverage vis-a-vis the totalitarian-minded factions of the Farabundo Marti Liberation Front.

Certainly the March vote was a step forward—ballots are always preferable to bullets, and any election is better than none. But this election did not go nearly far enough—like the internal settlement in Zimbabwe, it has served as a useful prelude, but it cannot offer a stable and just synthesis. For this to happen, both sides must agree on a new round of elections in which the left participates.

Ultimately, one hopes the Costa Rican model will be followed insofar as political superstructure is concerned, i.e., disarmament, pluralism, and elected government. At the same time, land reform and a general redistribution of wealth must be achieved. Otherwise, social justice and stability will continue to elude El Salvador.

—Gabriel Sucher
Washington, D.C.

CRIME AND SCHOOLING

THE LABOR DEPARTMENT IS PROposing to expand the hours and types of jobs that 14 and 15-year-olds are allowed to work. I am happy to see this loosening up of archaic laws. Child labor laws came about to stop terrible abuses. However, the abuses—12-14

hour working days; horribly unsafe and unsanitary working conditions, etc.—affected all laborers. Children were "protected" by making it nearly impossible for them to work. Women were similarly "protected." In the bargain working men continued to work the long hours in unsafe conditions.

Shortly after the child labor laws threw out the baby with the bath water, juvenile crime increased. (What else would the youngsters do? Traditionally working-class children went to work alongside their elders.) The crime problem was addressed by forcing compulsory schooling on the children.

Now the Labor Department would ease these restrictions. The AFL-CIO protests this action and bemoans the unemployment rate among those 16 and older. Indeed, the unemployment rate is scandalous and unacceptable. But why should 14 and 15-year-olds suffer? Our sinking economy cannot provide the goods, services and participation that a society as a whole needs. When will the AFL-CIO develop the guts to name the working person's real enemy—the greed and concentration of power of the large corporations. Unionists should demand that their leadership support the Labor Department's proposal to allow 14 and 15-year-olds a freer chance to work. Labor must unite and fight together; all ages, all sexes, all races.

—Bob Corbett
Webster Groves, Mo.

INITIATIVES, ANYONE?

YOUR COVERAGE OF DEMOCRATIC Socialists of America (DSA), Citizens Party, and citizen's public interest organizations, attitudes toward and involvement in the 1982 elections have been very enlightening. While a full debate on electoral strategy has been aired on the pages of this paper, I find that one position has yet to be considered. Despite the recent trend, Massachusetts Fair Share recently voted to involve itself only with state ballot initiative issues, and not support candidates. What effect might organizations like these have if every state had ballot initiatives, or if the constitution could be changed to allow for national initiatives and referendums?

Might we not accelerate the process of social change by circumventing the power of corporate lobbies and their influence upon our representatives? Despite massive spending by corporations in initiative campaigns the outcomes have been generally progressive.

Even if laws that protect corporate involvement in initiative campaigns cannot be changed, the vastly increased use of the initiative option might overtax corporations' ability to respond.

—David McVeigh-Schultz
Ardley, Pa.

CORRECTION

I WAS PLEASED TO FIND COVERAGE OF those Jewish groups that oppose the Israeli government's policies in Lebanon (*ITT*, July 28).

I was, however, misquoted in the section describing some of the views held by Americans for Progressive Israel, a socialist Zionist organization.

The correct quote should have read, "Socialist Zionism, which calls for Jewish self-determination, goes hand in hand with, in fact necessitates support of, Palestinian self-determination."

While there is certainly a consensus among socialist Zionists, both here and in Israel, about support for Palestinian self-determination—which for many, if not most, translates into a call for a Palestinian state alongside Israel—no such consensus exists with respect to the PLO.

Socialist Zionist views on this issue range from those who believe Israel should enter into negotiations with the PLO, to those who would support negotiations with any Palestinian representative that recognize Israel's right to exist and renounce terrorism. Further, among those who advocate negotiations with the PLO, most do so based on the belief that the PLO is the only recognized representative of the Palestinian people, and not out of support for PLO tactics and policies.

It is important for the left to speak out against those policies of the Israeli government that are deplorable. However, it is equally as critical to speak out against those reprehensible policies of the PLO, the Syrians, and other governments in the region; unfortunately, many on the left have been silent in this regard.

It is necessary for Americans for Progressive Israel and other groups and individuals who support both Jewish and Palestinian self-determination to make their voices heard.

—Donna Nevel
Jackson Heights, N.Y.

Editor's note: Please try to keep letters under 250 words in length. Otherwise we may have to make drastic cuts, which may change what you want to say. Also, if possible, please type and double-space letters—or at least write clearly and with wide margins.

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IN DEPTH

Realtors don't like marketplace magic

By Wallace Kaufman

A

BUSINESSMAN IN NORTH Carolina's booming Research Triangle area recently switched realtors after his four bed-

room, two bath, \$97,000 subdivision home had languished on the market for almost nine months. The new realtor has advertised it for five months—with no luck. Both realtors and the seller have joined builders and buyers in scapegoating high interest rates for their problems.

They are supported by Dr. Jack Carlson, an economist and executive vice-president of the National Association of Realtors. "We are immersed in the worst housing depression since the 1930s," Carlson says, blaming the government deficits and borrowing that have driven up interest rates.

But the loud focus on interest rates diverts attention from a more important split between President Reagan and the business forces that financed his rise to power.

Traditionally, the realtors and homebuilders have sounded very much like the president. Their annual Private Property Week has prompted the positive connection between home ownership and the free enterprise system. Their political action committees have backed prominent conservative candidates. Like these politicians the conservative realtors and homebuilders have called for an end to government interference in their industry and in business affairs in general.

Unfortunately for conservative politicians, including President Reagan, the housing industry has collapsed just as the president wants to set it free to experience what he frequently calls "the magic of the market place."

Perhaps lower interest rates would help the housing industry survive in the market a few more months, but lower rates alone cannot cure the depression. The housing depression is the result of a rising tide of market forces held back by a once effective barrier of government protection. For several decades home prices continued to rise faster than inflation without losing buyers because the government programs insulated the industry from the free market.

Beginning with massive loans to veterans in the '40s, the government created a variety of financial programs to help

Americans pay for houses that builders made and realtors sold. The Federal Housing Administration and the Farm Home Administration worked alongside the Veterans Administration to lend money and guarantee private lenders. Government-created corporations pumped new money into lending institutions by buying the mortgages they had made.

The government also subsidized insurance, water and sewers. Timber from government land has been sold below the cost of conducting the sales and replanting.

Homeowners received special tax breaks on interest, property tax, depreciation and energy saving devices.

These measures and more helped home prices defy the usual laws of economic gravity. Between 1964 and the time home prices leveled off in 1977 the Consumer Price Index climbed 130.6 percent while home prices climbed 180.8 percent.

It should have been clear to everyone that despite government help, market forces were bound to break through on two fronts—affordability and investment potential. Since the mass marketing of Levittown's Cape Cod cottages the single family home has seemed affordable to almost any working American. Realtors have urged buyers on by assuring them that their homes would be "the best investments you'll ever make."

Several things combined to decrease demand for housing. The media sums them up in the word *price*, but "affordability" is a more accurate term.

While home prices were rising slightly faster than disposable income other costs of owning a home have been soaring. Between 1955 and 1975 disposable income rose 183 percent while the median price of a new home rose 191 percent. During the same two decades according to the National Association of Home Builders, real estate taxes climbed 341 percent, insurance 321 percent, maintenance and repairs 269 percent and utilities 199 percent.

John Hart, president of the National Association of Homebuilders (NAHB), warned in 1975 that these costs had priced eight out of 10 buyers out of the market. The real estate industry was content to service a fifth of the potential market and let mobile home dealers and the government take care of the others.

Even the remaining buyers, however, had to set aside a larger and larger percentage of their income to buy and own

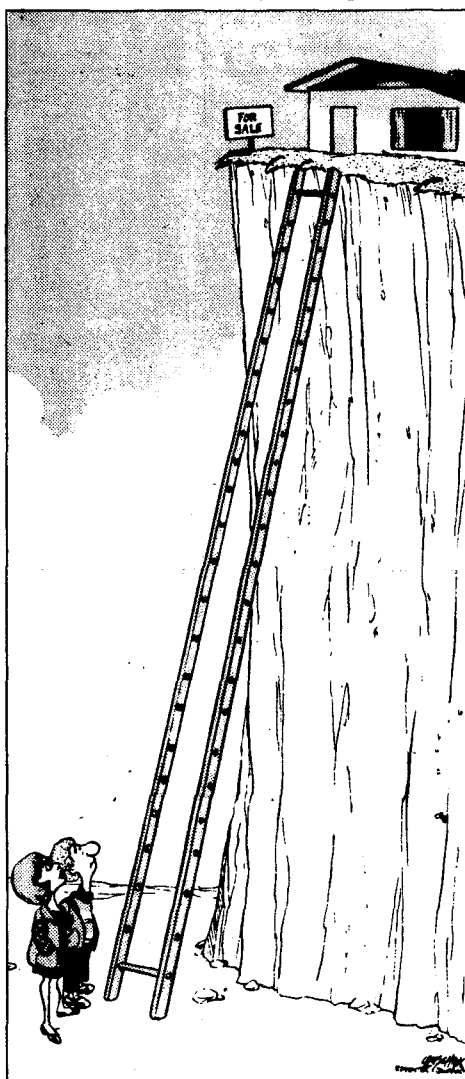
a home. From 1973 on, monthly payments increased as a percent of average family income, rising from 17.3 percent in 1973 to 36.7 percent in 1981.

Realtors and lenders and homebuilders responded by creating devices to lure buyers with short term affordability. These included graduated mortgage payments rising over the years, balloon payment mortgages with low payments for a few years then the balance suddenly due in full, and floating interest rate mortgages. Recession, increasing unemployment, wage freezes and general economic uncertainty have made buyers too wary to respond in significant numbers.

Contractors act.

In the fall of 1981 all over the country normally conservative homebuilders took to the streets and public parks and steps of municipal buildings for "unlock-the-economy" rallies protesting high interest rates. Audiences were urged to protest to Congress. Homebuilders promoted the rallies through large newspaper ads showing a key and the message, "Send Congress One of These."

But the Reagan administration has been trying to get across the real message little by little: It wants to return housing to the market economy. This past Janu-



ary Samuel R. Pierce Jr., Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, told the National Association of Homebuilders he wanted Congress to tie FHA mortgage rates to market interest rates. "I don't care," he said, "whether they're up or down. I want the market to decide."

In the midst of the housing depression the real estate industry seemed scared by seeing its own past wishes for freedom come true. Realtors and builders have fled back into the arms of Uncle Sam, calling for programs that clash head on with the Reagan economic faith in whose cause they spent huge sums of lobbying money last year.

The National Association of Homebuilders has called on the government to pay banks a subsidy equal to the difference between an affordable loan for first-time buyers and the going market rate. The NAHB also wants the administration to continue subsidies for low-income homebuyers.

Realtors are supporting the creation of tax exempt revenue bonds to finance housing. The bonds would, of course, compete with water, sewer, road and school bonds and deprive the treasury of revenues received from taxing interest income.

A new tax bill introduced in Congress in March has also made the industry perk up. House Resolution 5948 would give new homebuyers up to \$5,400 in tax cre-

dits for the purchase of a new or existing home. If they are not paying that much in taxes in the year of purchase, they can claim the subsidy from the previous three years' taxes.

Since Reagan is likely to continue to insist on the "magic of the market place," the industry will most likely go back to beating on high interest rates in hope of getting the Federal Reserve to soften up. But even if the interest rate declines four or five points, the situation will not improve very much. The NAHB estimates that at a 13 percent rate only 11.8 percent of the nation's families could qualify for a 30-year, \$60,000 mortgage on today's median priced home.

The Reagan program has left the industry and its clients looking at only two stark solutions, to lower the price demanded by sellers and to downgrade the size and style of house demanded by buyers. But buyers have not been scaling down their hopes fast enough to help overstocked builders, and realtors and sellers of existing homes. Most are simply waiting and hoping. The equity they might have invested in a home is sitting comfortably in money markets or certificates of deposit.

Sellers are showing more give than buyers. The holy of holies, the ever-rising sale price and profit has collapsed. The most obvious evidence that asking prices have been too high is the bloated multiple listing books and the ever-staler ads in the Sunday real estate sections. Lower the sale price enough and even with a 17 percent mortgage a home becomes affordable. Only this past fall did brokers and builders swallow enough pride to begin to admit, very quietly, that the return on the home investment they had loudly promoted had to come down.

Prices, in fact, have been coming down in real dollars all over for almost three years. Since 1979 the rise in home prices has fallen short of inflation.

In California, once the country's premier home investment area with fabled profits, brokers are reporting no new price rises and some declines. Even in affluent Dallas builders have been predicting a leveling off. Since builders and brokers downplay such bad news, we can assume the trend is cutting much deeper.

The real estate industry has tried desperately to disguise the problem, but the masks are finally falling. Trade publications are admitting that the "creative financing" schemes of the past few years are simply ways to keep the sale price steady on paper while cutting returns in less obvious ways.

For the last two years builders have been unloading inventory through "buy-downs." Instead of cutting the price, they pay the bank a sum to lower the interest rate on the mortgage for one year, five or even 30. The builder, of course, has effectively lowered his price or at least his profit, but he hopes he has not made the rest of his inventory look overpriced or angered his over-priced colleagues. And of course no one wants to panic homebuyers into thinking that home ownership can be a losing proposition even if that is true.

Other sellers are cutting into their return by taking low-yielding second mortgages. And everywhere the industry's ads announce rebates and reduced prices or interest rates. Brokers have been the last to cut their part of the costs, but as more go broke, commissions are coming down. The current housing crisis has been much more effective than the law in breaking up commission fixing arrangements.

One of America's biggest industries as well as its most content and stable body of citizens, homeowners, are face to face with the realities of becoming part of the "magic of the market place." The fact that they don't like what the magician in the White House is pulling out of his hat and sleeves may be the end of automatic support from middle-income Americans and the business community for a simplistic but politically successful vision of the free market.

Wallace Kaufman is a real estate broker in Pittsboro, N.C. His writings have appeared in the *New York Times*, *Newsday*, and *Southern Exposure*.



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SCHOOLING

Overcrowding: No easy answers

This is the first of a two-part article about Los Angeles public schools.

By Norm Fruchter

HOOVER ELEMENTARY school serves part of the Wilshire-Olympic corridor of Los Angeles, a once-white area now predominantly Latino and Asian. Hoover was built for 350 children in 1926. Last September more than 2,200 children, 70 percent of them Latino and 28 percent Asian, were assigned to the school. But because the L.A. school system determined that Hoover's capacity was only 1,875 children, the additional 350 were bused to other less crowded schools.

Most school systems are incapable of transforming buildings designed for 350 children into institutions holding almost 2,000, but L.A. has become ingenious at maintaining increasing numbers of minority children in existing facilities. According to L.A. Superior Court Judge Gitelson's 1970 ruling ordering L.A. to desegregate its schools, the district was prohibited from building new schools that perpetuate existing patterns of segregation. Faced with building only new integrated schools, the district chose not to build. To create more classroom space at Hoover and other overcrowded minority schools, the district erected temporary huts, which it calls bungalows, on school grounds, nearby parking lots and other available space. And the first and second grades were placed on double session at Hoover and other schools, which reduced class time but doubled the amount of classroom space in those grades. Finally, to create still more classrooms, the entire Hoover Street school was placed on what the L.A. schools call a Year-Round schedule, perhaps L.A.'s most innovative solution to minority overcrowding.

L.A. schools that serve almost 25 percent of the district's children, most of them Latino and Asian. Each Year-Round school is divided into four tracks, and each track is scheduled for a repeating cycle of 45 school days (nine weeks) and 15 vacation days (three weeks). School begins on July 1st. Summer vacation disappears. Teachers either follow their track, taking the same pattern of three week vacations as their students, or they become "rainbow teachers," working with a mixed-track schedule. All non-rainbow teachers must dismantle their classrooms after their nine-week stints are completed, and set up new classrooms after each three-week vacation. This system nets L.A. 25 percent more classroom capacity. By combining the classroom space gained through the temporary bungalows with the space saved by double sessions in first and second grade, and the additional space generated by Year-Round scheduling, L.A. has transformed Hoover Street from a 56-year-old school built for 350 students into a school supposedly serving 1,875 directly and 350 more by satellite.

But at what price? Double sessions cost each first and second grader 20 percent of normal classroom time per week and 75 percent of Hoover's students attend classes in unheated, inadequately cooled "temporary" bungalows, many of them almost 10 years old. "Without the southern California climate, the Board could never get away with it," says Henry Curtis, a longtime Hoover teacher. "But even with our swamp coolers we roast in the summer." The five-fold student increase puts enormous pressure on limited playground space, li-

brary facilities, auditorium and cafeteria, all designed for only 350 students. The lavatory needs of the more than 800 boys who eat lunch in the cafeteria are met by one boy's bathroom with five toilets.

"The Year-Round schedule makes childcare arrangements a nightmare for many parents," says Pam Tiger, a school nurse in several Year-Round schools. "My son likes the three weeks off but doesn't like missing his summer. What happens to the mother who has three kids in different tracks, all attending school and taking vacations on different schedules?" Moreover, "once you start Year-Round, you're locked into it," Henry Curtis points out. "You have to start each new year on July 1st." Yet, as Jeff Horton, one of the coordinators for Teachers for Change, a left caucus within the United Teachers of Los Angeles union, observes, "Lots of district functions shut down during the summer. Not only was there very limited coordination last summer, but crucial parts of the school system acted as if Year-Round weren't happening. Getting supplies became a critical problem."

The suburbs prosper.

Year-Round was supposed to relieve the conditions at the district's most overcrowded schools. But as research prepared by Henry Gutierrez, director of the Hispanic Urban Center, demonstrates, overcrowded schools in the predominantly white San Fernando Valley are spared the relief of Year-Round. Worse, argues Gutierrez, "approximately 59 percent of the schools on Year-Round operation are still overcrowded; this program did not provide any relief." Gutierrez's research has identified a deficit of 800-900 classrooms in overcrowded schools throughout L.A., and a surplus of almost 1,500 empty classrooms in other L.A. schools. "Yet the district persists in telling parents that the only alternative to Year-Round schools is one-way busing to distant neighborhoods."

Black schools tend not to be overcrowded in L.A. The black student population has maintained a stable rate—25 percent of total school population—between 1970-78, and has actually declined a bit since then. (The Hispanic student population, currently 47 percent, doubled during the last decade.) But many black students attend predominantly white San Fernando Valley schools through another ingenious L.A. program called Permits with Transportation, or PWT, a one-way busing program that served almost 20,000 students in 1980-81, only 1 percent of them white. Originally begun as a voluntary alternative to mandatory student reassignment for school desegregation, PWT now allows minority children to escape their neighborhood schools, and also allows white Valley schools with declining enrollments to maintain their staffs. "If PWT was discontinued," says Annie Richardson, parent activist and coordinator in District 5 in central L.A., "one hundred Valley schools would have to close." But PWT kids attend those Valley schools on sufferance. They are often tracked into limited academic programs, suffer teacher and administrative harassment, and can be sent back to their neighborhood school for any infraction.

The new construction and spacious campus setting of the many Valley schools to which PWT students are bused make a stark contrast to old, overcrowded schools like Hoover. Many of the San Fernando Valley schools were built in the '50s and early '60s, following the massive

expansion of white professionals and skilled workers into the Valley. "For 20 years, we got 'yes' votes on bond issues," says Robert Docter, professor of Education at Cal State, Northridge and L.A. School Board member from 1969-77. "We were building a school a week in the Valley. But once the Valley schools were built, Valley voters said no."

Hoover Street's density is 606 children per acre, compared to an L.A. school average of 120 children per acre. (Many Valley schools have considerably less than 100 children per acre.) The per-pupil cost differential is similarly skewed—some Valley elementary schools spend almost three times as much money, per pupil, as minority overcrowded schools spend, and several Valley junior highs spend twice as much, per pupil, as their inner-city counterparts. These differentials are caused, in part, by an L.A. policy that allocates operating costs (other than teachers' salaries) according to a square footage formula, which rewards newer schools with expansive campus settings and penalizes old, overcrowded schools like Hoover, which have lots of students but very little space.

Hoover Street is one of 300 Racially Isolated Minority Schools—or RIMS—in a school system 47 percent Latino, 22 percent black, 8 percent Asian and 23 percent white. The L.A. system acknowledges that RIM schools need improvement. Median scores on the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills, given to all L.A. schoolchildren in the third, fifth and eighth grades, range from the 50th and 60th percentiles in the predominantly white Valley and west L.A. districts to the 20th and 30th percentiles (and often lower) in the overwhelmingly minority districts. Only 5 percent of the district's Title I schools scored above the national norm in the sixth grade reading test last year. (Title I funds are allocated to schools in the poorest neighborhoods in urban districts. In one of New York City's most poverty-stricken areas in the South Bronx, 12 percent of the district's Title I schools reached the national norm.)

Educational improvement within RIM schools is the centerpiece of L.A.'s now voluntary desegregation plan, yet only 5 percent of L.A.'s \$1.7 billion budget is allocated for RIMS improvement. Worse, almost half of all RIMS funds went to maintain class size ratios of 28-1; without this expenditure, class size would presumably go much higher. Another 20 percent of RIMS funds go to subsidize teachers for agreeing to teach in RIM schools; the Urban Classroom Teachers Program offers an 11 percent salary increment to teachers who accept assignments in L.A.'s neediest minority schools. Since 1977, when the U.S. Office of Civil Rights ordered the desegregation of the L.A. teaching staff, RIM schools have been hard up for faculty. Black teachers were scattered through previously white schools, thereby breaking up many effective staffs at minority schools. Many white teachers assigned to minority schools either resigned, took leaves or failed to show up. Integrationists, faced

with a teacher shortage of crisis proportions, reluctantly accepted "battle pay," as the program is labeled throughout L.A. "None of us liked the idea," says Annie Richardson. "We had done everything else but we still couldn't get teachers into those classrooms."

Battle pay carries a stipulation that teachers must contribute an additional two-and-a-half hours per week to some educational activity, to be determined by the principal. The United Teachers of Los Angeles (UTLA), a combined NEA-AFT union of some 16,000 members (out of 30,000 teachers), is 70 percent white, 25 percent black, and 5 percent Latino and Asian. White Valley teachers, with tenure, seniority and stability, dominate the union. The UTLA accepted both battle pay (by a very small margin) and the imposition of Year-Round scheduling by the L.A. school system.

In spite of battle pay, Year-Round schooling and L.A.'s other attempts to improve the quality of education for minorities, no improvement is evident. "Some of the same charges Latino students documented when they walked out in 1968 are still prevalent," argues Henry Gutierrez. "Insensitive teachers, shortage of materials, prison conditions, culturally distant curriculum, inadequate language provision." Gutierrez estimates that only half the students identified by district testing as needing bilingual instruction are actually receiving it, and thinks that more than 50 percent of the district's bilingual teachers are really monolingual and teaching through waivers obtained from the state. Though L.A. claims it uses waivers because it can't fill its bilingual positions, Jeff Horton of Teachers for Change thinks that "surrounding districts have been far more successful in recruiting bilingual teachers than L.A. has. Conditions are so bad in L.A. that bilingual teachers leave. The result is lots of classrooms where kids can't understand teachers and teachers depend on aides for basic communication."

Los Angeles has fashioned a unique school system. Not only are the 77 percent minority students thoroughly segregated, but even L.A. school administrators find it difficult to pretend that the dual system is separate but equal. Through gross disparities in school density, per-pupil expenditure and student assignment policies, L.A.'s minority students stabilize the system's white schools. But minority students pay a severe price for their critical role in sustaining successful white schools: severe overcrowding, continuous scheduling, achievement results only half as good as their white counterparts. An 18-year fight against desegregation has produced these dismal results. "L.A. is the only city in the nation that has gotten out of a mandatory court order to desegregate its schools," says Henry Gutierrez. "That's testimony to the power of conservative, segregationist forces here." How L.A. managed to forestall desegregation is the subject of the next article.

Norm Fruchter writes regularly for *In These Times* on education.

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FOREIGN POLICY

Chomsky's challenges

**Towards a New Cold War;
Essays on the Current Crisis
and How We Got There**
By Noam Chomsky
Pantheon Books, 498 pp., \$8.95

By Walter LaFeber

Noam Chomsky has never hidden his dislike for Israel's policy toward the Palestinians. Nor has he hesitated to condemn the United States for encouraging and supporting the policy,

other invasion of Lebanon in an effort to administer the coup de grace to the PLO and to disperse the refugees once again....The U.S. could do a good deal to ameliorate the situation, but the opportunities, which are diminishing, are not being exploited, and there is no current indication that the foolhardy policies of past years will be modified." Chomsky saw no reason to change that assessment after the Camp David accords were struck

rights advocate Jimmy Carter in the White House, killed at least 10 percent of the population and reduced the remainder to a level of starvation and misery that one witness believed surpassed Cambodia's. Chomsky shows how the U.S. government, aided by leading U.S. reporters (who considered East Timor beneath their attention), and such media as the *New York Times*, managed to avoid examining the overwhelming evidence of the U.S.-supported adventure while beating their breasts over affairs in Cambodia that they could not influence.

His listings of how the media went along with government explanations form one of his better developed insights. Along with passion, which shapes every sentence, this insight is the book's major strength. Chomsky might be thought of as an amateur historian and sometime political commentator, but as a pioneer—indeed a revolutionary—in the field of linguistics, he has peculiar sensitivity to the way professional historians and politicians misuse language and written evidence.

He does not have to search far. One essay notes examples of how mainstream commentators stress the U.S. "concern for human rights and...liberal, pluralistic democracies," and then omit any mention of Guatemala, Chile or Iran. Or they blame U.S. policy failures on "Wilsonian principles of peace and self-determination," offer no examples of how these principles have guided U.S. policy, and then conclude by restating the principles as truth. Or the liberal media turn Eugene McCarthy into a hero in 1968 for challenging a badly-wounded president, when McCarthy showed little interest before or after that episode in vigorously analyzing the fundamentals of U.S. foreign relations. Where was the Minnesota Senator, Chomsky asks, when Wayne Morse and Ernest Gruening almost alone questioned the slaughter in Vietnam?

Chomsky's target in these essays is not so much the government (he seems to expect little honorable or honest from it in any event), but the media and especially the intellectuals who shill for officials by accepting whatever phrase ("self-determination") or policy (a "crisis of democracy") exists, according to the Trilateral Commission and Reagan's advisors, because



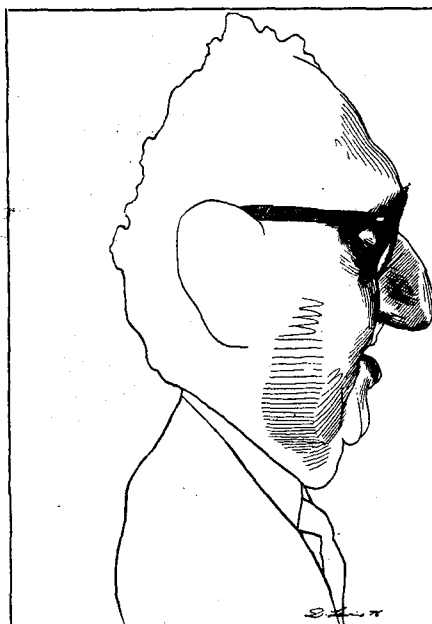
Chomsky recalls the plans of Moshe Dayan (above) to dismember Lebanon.

particularly when in other parts of their foreign relations the Israelis worked closely with the Shah and South Africa's leadership, or when they helped arm the Argentine military rulers and the Somoza dictatorship in Nicaragua. Since this book is mostly comprised of essays originally published between 1973 and 1981, the chance for surprise therefore seemed small.

But in the middle of the book came this passage from an essay published in 1975: "In the early 1950s, the government of Israel developed plans to dismember Lebanon." After he traces that history through Moshe Sharett's diaries and Moshe Dayan's words, Chomsky offers a prediction: "Sooner or later, Israel will probably find a pretext for an-

(his downplaying, even ignoring, these agreements is notable), and unfortunately even less reason exists in mid-1982 for him to trade in his crystal ball.

Chomsky is instructive about the present and future because he is serious about the past. He is certainly more serious about the past than many professional historians, whom he condemns in several important essays in this collection as intellectuals cooperating with the "state propaganda machine." And he is deadly serious about the use of evidence. Chomsky considers that to be a life-and-death matter, as, indeed, it is in the essay of Indonesia's invasion of East Timor. The invaders, with the help of Daniel Patrick Moynihan in the United Nations and human



Chomsky reveals the way Kissinger (above) manipulates language in his memoirs.

we are demanding too much from government) that happens to be in vogue at the time. He is less concerned at key points in reconstructing the past than in demonstrating how academics, reporters and Henry Kissinger's memoirs misrepresent the past.

His review of Kissinger's first volume of memoirs, reprinted in this collection, is perhaps the best of all the published reviews. Chomsky does not so much challenge Kissinger's policies (as did, say, Michael Howard in his widely noted review of the memoirs in *Times Literary Supplement*), as shred his arguments by showing his manipulation of words. Pundits such as Howard want to debate Kissinger on issues of high policy. Chomsky wants to do so on the issue of honesty. Chomsky deserves the greater attention.

During a recent lecture at Cornell, Kissinger was reportedly paid his usual \$15,000 fee for repeating the tired and untrue clichés that the U.S. was not involved in Allende's overthrow, that the Chilean President was anti-democratic, and that Watergate prevented the Nixon administration from ending the Vietnam war honorably. Most of the media accepted these and similar statements with uncritical wonderment. Chomsky anticipated all this in his essay.

Chomsky's methods and values are similar to those of I.F. Stone. Neither uses or needs inside information. They instead read newspapers and public statements (although Stone's major source, congressional testimony, is much less exploited by Chomsky), and they use information in the public domain to show the inconsistencies, contradictions, and hypocrisy of announced government policies. As a journalist, Stone tried to educate his fellow professionals as well as fellow Americans. As an intellectual, Chomsky is trying to demonstrate that, to paraphrase Dr. Johnson, if patriotism is the last refuge of scoundrels we need not worry, but if it is the last resort of intellectuals we are on the edge of disaster.

Resembling Stone's best work, these are important political essays. But Chomsky apparently wants the book to be more than that. In a long "Introduction" that allows him to set the context for the essays and give his views on Reagan's early policies, Chomsky notes in passing the importance of "capitalism" and its effect on the world. He opens a key essay ("Foreign Policy and the Intelligensia") with the observation that "If we hope to understand anything [sic] about the foreign policy of any state, it is a good idea to begin by investigating the domestic social structure. Who sets foreign pol-

icy? What interests do these people represent?"

These are the pivotal questions, true enough, but they are not examined in these essays. Chomsky's concern is more intellectual history and analysis than a dissection of the needs of the political-economic power structure that shape the policy. He argues correctly, for example, that the causes of the Vietnam war can be best understood not as a "quagmire," or attempts by presidents to protect their right-wing political flanks, but as a part of U.S. empire-building after 1945. Nothing more is done with that insight, and the essays turn to analyzing the rhetoric that emerged from the state propaganda agencies.

Some years ago, however, Chomsky suggested that a major reason for the original U.S. involvement between 1950 and 1954 was to keep Southeast Asia open for Japanese exploitation. Preserving Japan as part of the West's capitalist and containment system was the major U.S. objective, not the principle of self-determination. Chomsky was challenged on this point and, to my knowledge, has not raised it since. This is unfortunate, because the *Pentagon Papers* and other new sources show conclusively that the concern for Japanese capitalism was a major cause for the initial U.S. involvement in Vietnam. The "New Cold War" cannot be understood apart from the rise and fall of the North-South economic system that Washington officials constructed between 1944 and 1960. Even the suggestive sections on the activities of oil companies in the Middle East lack the rigor and precision that characterize Chomsky's slashing of the ideas offered up by the state propagandists.

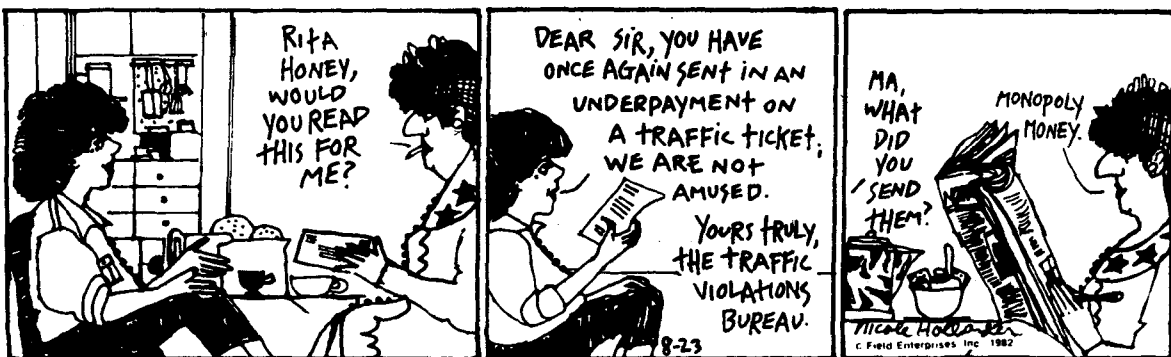
But we should be grateful for what is here. Recently a leading correspondent for one of the two most powerful newspapers in the country lamented privately that he and his paper simply could not tell all they knew about Reagan's stupidities and the ineptness of his foreign policy. The media had already destroyed three presidents, this person claimed; it could not be responsible for the failure of a fourth. Someone else would have to take the lead.

He should read this book and save some of his remorse. Chomsky demonstrates that the media and academia have done all too little in puncturing the most important myths that govern the American empire. And that is a major reason indeed, although not the only one, why we are immersed in the mire of a New Cold War.

Walter LaFeber teaches history at Cornell University.

Sylvia

by Nicole Hollander



ART «» ENTERTAINMENT

MOVIES

Xica: a carnal knowledge of colonialism

By Pat Aufderheide

When the movie *Xica*, about an 18th-century black slave who became mistress to the richest man on the Brazilian diamond frontier, first opened in Brazil in 1978, it was as much a scandal as a box office smash. Some charged that it was shameless pornography, others that it sneaked in leftist messages and still others that director Carlos Diegues, a veteran of the *cinema novo* movement of the '60s, had sold out to mainstream values. No one knew quite what to make of the film's bawdy humor, harking back to a Brazilian 18th-century theater with some stylistic parallels to English Restoration comedy.

Now having its first commercial run in the U.S., *Xica* stands to generate controversy here too, though the terms will undoubtedly be different in a context where it's a foreign film. In Brazil, *Xica* is not only "an erotic-exotic comedy." It's a comment on the Brazilian national identity, and on the psychology of the colonized (and neo-colonized).

The plot revels in the legends surrounding the historical figure of Xica (short for Francisca, and pronounced "Sheika") da Silva. Xica (Zeze Motta), the slave of a military official in the far backlands of Brazil and the object of his son's whooping lust, is already notorious when Joao Fernandes (Walmor Chagas), the new official, arrives to check corruption. He claims he will find his destiny there, and it turns out to be linked with hers.

Fernandes is a wheeler-dealer. When Xica stages a tantrum to show off her body—and her outrageous spirit—to him, he immediately falls for her. When her owner won't sell, Fernandes calmly reminds him he could send the hapless official into exile, and suddenly the sale is made. Fernandes cuts through the corruption problem with equal aplomb. Between smugglers and greedy bureaucrats, the crown isn't seeing a fraction of its share of the diamonds—one-fifth of all discoveries. Rather than arrest smugglers, though, he merely follows them—they're the experts, after all—to the good diamond sites, and moves in himself.

He becomes ever richer, while he falls ever more helplessly under the spell of the sexually-captivating Xica. She uses him to get her papers of freedom and to live like a fantasy princess, with her own palace and servants, her own lake and ship. Even so she becomes bored in her self-made gilded cage, while her lover through these lavish favors col-

lects enemies who complain secretly to the crown. Soon an inspector (Jose Wilker) shows up to arrest him, and not even Xica's charms can keep him from destroying the empire built on air.

Barbarous luxury.

Xica's character and her situation form a stunning metaphor for the sumptuously sordid colonial experience in Brazil (and not just Brazil). Diegues' broad comedic style makes the metaphor work, carnally as well as intellectually.

Xica's masters are both corrupt agents of empire. She takes advantage of them with all the wit and improvisation of the wily slave (the wily colonial, the wily

The movie opens, for instance, with the strains of a classical chamber ensemble—but this is no chamber. The musicians, in perukes and finery, are playing from music held by semi-nude black slaves, and they are taking a break from their pack train journey through desolate mountain country. The bandits who fall on them wait politely until the musical piece has ended.

These are people who build Baroque palaces in scrub backlands. Their living rooms are littered with gunnysacks of trade goods, and their attendants wear rags. Cravenly deferential to superiors, they can wield a whip over a suspected smuggler and wrench open a slave's jaw to look at teeth without a second thought.

The wealth and pomp are spectacular—diamonds pour out of people's hands. But it's dead-end prosperity. What isn't siphoned off by the crown goes into the passing spectacle of daily life.

They are all slaves of the colonial relationship—except for the bandit (Marcus Vinicius), the one free man. Even he is caught in the mesh of colonial politics when Xica tries to get him to raise an army against the crown. You can only escape such a world as long as you

they do the *Playboy*-fed American man's), she establishes a character with malicious sexual curiosity, raging anger and perpetual restlessness. She is not likable, but she makes it easy to believe that Xica could make men sell their souls.

The script gives her an abundance of crassly effective set-ups. Diegues is past master at the high-spirited use of pageantry. (His later *Bye Bye Brazil* also showed off his canny ability to turn cheap theatrics into movie magic.) In one climactic scene, she stages a huge African fete for the inspector. Course after course of African specialties is accompanied by a group of male African musicians. Then black slave women perform a terrifyingly elegant African dance. And then it comes—a howlingly lascivious mating dance by Xica, nearly naked and covered in gold paint.

An actress could wait a lifetime for a scene like that, much less the movie that can give such a scene meaning.

These gaudy theatrics do more than show off Xica. They point up the way that the grandest colonial pretensions were like stage sets that could be demolished overnight.

Diegues' choice of a hyperbolic comedic style—slapstick prat-

nervously to Joao Fernandes, "Artists shouldn't meddle in politics, isn't that right?" Well, it's still a question. *Xica* became a hit at a time when the military regime was loosening up its censorship of movies, when the state film agency, Embrafilme, was being restructured, and when the failures and successes of *cinema novo* had had time to be evaluated. *Xica*'s widespread success raised the question of whether this film had succeeded in *cinema novo*'s unaccomplished goal: to make movies popular at the box office and also in the sense of reflecting critically the concerns of the Brazilian people.

Was this serious Brazilian filmmaking art for the '80s, people asked—films that could be respected by international critics and reflect the crisis-ridden national identity? Or was this just a more sophisticated version of the infamous *pornochanchada*, the soft-core beach-blanket and adultery-with-giggles features that Brazil churned out to meet national quotas in the '70s?

Diegues, whose first feature, *Ganga Zumba* (about a 17th-century runaway slave hideout), was a hallmark *cinema novo* film, was stung by the form the controversy took. It didn't just affect his vanity, as it might a director who emerges from independent filmmaking poverty in the U.S. to make it in Hollywood.

In Brazil, pervaded by the terms of economic dependence, your artistic reputation is linked to your claim to represent national identity, character, or national problems with integrity. To complicate the question of integrity, Brazil has no "Hollywood," no hope of challenging American hegemony of film production and distribution on the free market. Success at movie-making is by and large linked to government backing, whether through grants, distrib-

Continued on the following page

The story of the black slave who became a powerful consort—for a while—is true.

black, the wily woman, the wily underdog). But no matter how much she exploits them—even if she ruins them—she can't exploit them as much as they limit her.

Their world is a frontier, an outpost of empire in the crude first stages of exploitation. It is a world of contrasts, between a civilization rendered decadent and a barbarism that only such a civilization could create. The contrast is drawn in the film with as much humor as accuracy.

aren't discovered. There is also, however, a raw passion and energy to that frontier life. It surfaces in Xica's ebullience, not just her sexual potency but her will to assert herself.

The key to making this metaphor work is Xica, and there could be nobody better than Motta to do it. With a strong but not classically beautiful body (although her muscular buttocks and small breasts suit Brazilian male taste more than

falls by characters who are almost caricatures (a silly, sycophantic military man, a pompous inspector, a dizzy official's wife), scatological and sexual jokes, and setups that Mel Brooks wouldn't be ashamed of—has a reason. All those references to the vulgar poetry and popular theater of the Brazilian Baroque are appropriate to the colonial era's weakness for showy excess.

In the film a musician says



FILM CLIPS



The independent logger in *MAD RIVER* opposes the "hippie" environmentalists.

Mad River: Hard Times in Humboldt County
Fine Line Productions,
1101 Masonic Ave., San Francisco, CA 94117

This hour-long documentary to be aired on most public TV stations Sept. 3 has great timing, although it's also well-enough made to last past the moment. Focusing on an economically hard-hit logging community in northern California, it recreates a remarkable drama. The story is told through the mouths of the principals—a young mill worker's family, an independent logging company owner and officials in the For-

est Service, large timber companies and unions. Since the filmmakers (Mark Freeman, Claire Schoen and Jack Wilson) treat each of the major local voices with sympathetic respect, you get the flesh-and-blood investment in the conflicting points of view. Their drama resonates with the daily headlines. When yet another mill shuts down, owners blame regulation and workers look grudgingly at the "hippies" who have increased the size of the Redwood National Forest. Then workers try to buy the mill, but they can't find the capital. The film ends with a

humor." "Revolution" may be a bit strong, but *Xica* is more than the fluff that its critics call it.

Take the question of historical accuracy. The conflicts of the film were the conflicts of the era. The Crown was desperate to make Brazil its only lucrative colony, yield ever more wealth to bankroll Portugal's failing imperial projects. Young men like Xica's first student-revolutionary lover were conspiring to set Brazil free from Portugal. Officials warred with each other, with agents of the bureaucratic reformer Marquis de Pombal who brought Bourbon-like efficiency to comfortably corrupt old arrangements. And relationships between masters and slaves—with all the rac-

question mark. The success of the modestly-narrated film is in capturing more than a moment or a problem. By following the mill shutdown it captures a process of understanding. It shows the people of Humboldt County—especially Bill, the mill worker—coming to an awareness of the core problem: Jobs are dying because the lumber industry has not planned for the future and depends on a short-term profit strategy that isn't connected with community concerns, economic or social. **PA**

Roses in December

First Run Features, 144 Bleeker St., New York, NY 10012
This hour-long documentary by Peabody-Award winning filmmaker Ana Carrigan and Bernard Stone, focusing on the life of Jean Donovan, the lay missionary murdered in El Salvador in 1980, is more than an eloquent memorial. It is also a thought-provoking comment on American understanding (and misunderstanding) of our government's international relationships. Donovan, whose dirt-covered body is disinterred on-screen in a sequence that the camera hauntingly returns to throughout the hour, was a well-off suburban Catholic girl who threw over a good job and a comfortable apartment for a danger-filled life of service in another country. How she got there and what she learned there are sketched through interviews with family and friends, old home movies, snapshots and readings from her letters and diary. She is an easy personality to identify with, and the film's *Missing*-like approach to the issue of U.S. involvement in El Salvador makes it useful for a wide variety of American audiences. The film was originally made for the public TV *Crisis to Crisis* series. **PA**



Barbara Jordan narrates the PBS *CRISIS TO CRISIS* series, where *ROSES IN DECEMBER* first showed.

Until She Talks

First Run Features,
144 Bleeker St.,
New York, NY 10012
This 45-minute color film by Mary Lampson dramatizes the ordeal of a young woman who refuses to testify before a grand jury and is sent to jail "until she talks." A fictional treatment of events many activists have lived through, it recreates the fear, intimidation and isolation of someone who chooses silence when subjected to the awesome and frequently-abused power of the grand jury. The film describes the grand jury system and its abuses, showing how resistance through non-collaboration can succeed. **NF**

Survivors

Survivors, 1765 Sutter St.,
San Francisco, CA 94115
This hour-long documentary, made by Steven Okazaki with co-producer Frances Politeo, introduces us to some of the thousand people now living in the U.S. who lived through the A-bomb blasts in Japan. The film was prompted by the formation of a survivors' organization to press for health benefits—up to now the government has looked the other way, while insurance companies drop the survivors if they discover their history. But this campaign appears in the film only at the end. Most of the documentary is occupied with in-depth interviews with victims, who recall the blast ("There were arms all over"; "No one was crying"; "I thought, 'Why can't they die?'"; "I was angry at myself for not being able to do anything"), and after. The special strength of the film, a useful resource for disarmament and antinuclear movement events, is its stress on the "after"—the long, partial physical, psychological and social recovery, or what psychologist Robert Jay Lifton calls in the film "a life-long encounter with death." They speak of hate for Americans, of guilt that they lived, of sadness, of nightmares after 30 years. Amazingly, they also speak of endurance and of hope. **PA**

Contributors: Pat Aufderheide, Norm Fruchter



Kuniko Jenkins survived the Hiroshima atomic blast and testifies in *SURVIVORS*.

ial tension that implied—permeated the tone of all encounters.

But didn't Diegues end up making a movie more about Xica's sex appeal than about colonial struggle? I would say that the movie gives you both, one in context of the other. The difference between this film and a *porno-chanchada* is that Xica has real heat, not pornographic titillation. Her sexuality has the ominous overtones of real life.

As a heroine she is more than sexy. She is gutsy, in a way that evokes the best and worst of the time. Little is known of the historical Xica, except that she was influential and widely disliked. This Xica, like her masters and her lovers, is feisty and quick-witted, and also greedy, oppor-

tunistic and power-hungry. She makes dependent alliances that cannot free her. She bullies servants and betrays her underground contacts among smugglers. When she falls from grace she becomes the butt of street jokes.

Her choice of alliances is part of the explanation for the real Xica's disappearance from history, at best a footnote to someone else's power. This disappearing act is the key to understanding a major theme of Latin America's history, one of exploitation from both within and without. It is the problem to which Gabriel Garcia Marquez's magnificent *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is addressed, and to which he refers in the title and the novel's last lines: "it was

foreseen that the city of mirrors (or mirages) would be wiped out by the wind and exiled from the memory of man...races condemned to one hundred years of solitude did not have a second opportunity on earth."

Diegues has a less bleak reading of the situation. Xica is a heroine with a saving utopian vision. Without solidarity, he wrote, "the established power will forever appear at the right moment to finish off the dream; but then, there is always the power of dreams..." Which is why he ends the film with Xica tickling her way up the stairs with her student-revolutionary lover.

Xica is provocative—doubly so, once for the sensual appetites and once for the mind. ■

Xica

Continued from previous page
ution or subsidies. And Diegues has fared well in the state-and-commercial film world.

Fighting for his credibility, Diegues released a statement claiming that *Xica* should be seen as a triumph for a politically conscious national Brazilian cinema, a film that used a style distinctively Brazilian rather than European-influenced. In making a flashy movie, he wasn't selling out, but trying to prove that "it is not necessary (or even possible) to confuse revolution and bad

BLACK MUSIC

Out of a musical Fort Knox

By Kalamu ya Salaam

The vaults of Atlantic Records are a musical Fort Knox stacked with the bullion of '50s and '60s R&B, blues and early R&R. *Albert King Masterworks*, *The Coasters Youngblood*, *Professor Longhair The Last Mardi Gras* (each two record sets) and *Ray Charles A Life in Music* (a big

rock as well as the sound of commercial blues within a few years' time." King's *Born under a Bad Sign* album (Stax, 1968) became, writes Palmer, the most influential blues album of its era. Within months Eric Clapton and Cream "were regurgitating chunks of it whole (e.g., 'Strange Brew' and 'Born under a Bad Sign')."

Albert King is an important

a personnel listing for each number. Although a bevy of honking tenor sax solos by King Curtis virtually defined the role of the tenor sax in R&R, the music on these recordings is of minor substance. What matters is the attitude and the delivery, and in this regard The Coasters were without peer.

Produced and written by a non-black songwriting team,

Longhair is the "Professor" of the wild piano style characterized by a rolling rhythm, percussive chords and trembling right hand embellishments. Here is where rock'n'roll piano jumps off.

This set was recorded February 3 and 4, 1978 at Tipitina's, the place where he frequently tickled the ivories in his last years. On a couple of cuts he flashes his idiosyncratic piano stylings, but for the most part Longhair's singing dominates these tracks. Longhair's voice is like Louis Armstrong shifted into boogie woogie with a whiskey hangover and whistling where the trumpet breaks would be. Longhair does not sound like nor imitate Armstrong, but he does the same thing that Armstrong did: translate an instrumental approach to a vocal style. Longhair's inimitable swoops and slippery rhythm accents are wonderfully captured on this recording. Although not as strong as *Crawfish Fiesta*, it is an important addition to the limited body of Longhair recordings.

Raw soul.

The five record Ray Charles box set is without a doubt the most important of the four packages in this series. Only Stevie Wonder is comparable to Ray Charles, and were it not for Ray's pioneering work it is doubtful that Wonder would have been

when he finished it was always musically excellent, a spiritually moving experience and undeniably black. This set documents the forging of the Ray Charles style.

First there are the blues—the cathartic song that laughs at pain and triumphs over trouble by shouting it out. If all Ray Charles sang were the blues he could have my money. But then too there is jazz—not three-chords-funk or fusion, but, he notes, "serious jazz." During the Atlantic years his band was as much a jazz combo as an R&B group, and they always played jazz numbers as part of their repertoire.

But the linchpin was gospel. Although others sang with a gospel-influenced style, it was Ray Charles who brought in the musical elements of gospel music: the way he used the Raylettes—his female singers who were the choir to the preachings of the right reverend; original songs written in the eight and 16 bar lengths common to gospel music; and especially the use of cyclical repetitions with a 3/4 or 6/8 rhythm over which he shouted and drove the band, the singers and the audience into a trance-like state, e.g. "I Got A Woman." Ray Charles is the mixed-media master of music.

Ray Charles' recordings of the '50s and the '60s never sound dated or stale. When one compares his music with other music of the same period, it is evident that Ray Charles was indeed charting new directions.

All of the major directions are included here. I think it would have made more sense to group the songs by style, particularly the jazz numbers (which include

"Professor" Longhair (below) was a major influence on Fats Domino.



You can trace the vitality and the longevity of great black music in this classic series of reissues.

able to achieve what he has, for it was Ray Charles who opened the ears of America to what some call "raw soul."

Charles sang as a man possessed, with a frenzied force that shattered the conventions of what many people knew as popular music. By sheer force of character, Ray Charles consistently stuck to the music forms within which he matured, and welded together blues, gospel and jazz into a unique style that allowed him to perform not only his own music and the music of his peers with authority, but also to range far and wide into C&W or pure pop Americana. And

a beautiful trio rendition of Ger-shwin's "The Man I Love"). But that caveat aside, any set that includes the live version of the ultimate Ray Charles blues number, "Drown In My Own Tears" (on which the Raylettes flutter in and forever influence the singing of female groups), the rocklicking "Let The Good Times Roll" (on which nearly the entire Basie band shouts at Ray Charles and Ray roars back with a force that almost overpowers the horns), the aforementioned "I Got A Woman" and "The Man I Love," plus four or five blues and jazz cuts with Milt Jackson (some of which have Ray's sharp blues alto sax) and numerous minor hits by Mr. Ray Charles, any set of albums that includes all of that, well!

This series is an indicator of the vitality and longevity of great black music not only as the root of American pop, but also, and more importantly, as a musical genre unto itself. May there be more releases of this same caliber from Atlantic. Or, as Ray would say, acknowledging the applause of an audience, "Thank you much. We appreciate it." Yes, indeed.

Kalamu ya Salaam is an editor of *Black Collegian*.



Ray Charles opened the ears of America to "raw soul."

five record box set), all attractively packaged, are the latest shipment of valuables from a company that probably has over a million hours of historic recordings on tape but that keeps only a fraction of that music in their catalogue.

Without exaggeration, these recordings represent the roots of contemporary American pop music. Their value is admirably documented in notes by producer Albert Goldman on the Longhair set, liners on the Albert King and Coasters by leading critic Robert Palmer, and in an attractive booklet by Nat Hentoff on Ray Charles. Much more than hype, these writings serve as primers on and validators of the cultural importance of these recordings.

As Palmer perceptively points out, Albert King's "mature playing and singing and the definitive soul rhythm section of the '60s slicked together to produce music that would fundamentally alter the mainstream of white

pre-Hendrix electric guitar influence. Although he lives and works here, his influence has traveled via English guitarists who admired and emulated him rather than by guitarists who heard him on his home ground.

Throughout these cuts Albert King demonstrates that he is a master at mixing a sophisticated and relaxed approach to rhythm and vocals while maintaining an emotionally intense authority in his solo guitar style. Palmer aptly metaphorically dubs Albert King "The Velvet Bulldozer." Seven cuts are from the aforementioned influential *Bad Sign* album and feature Booker T & the MGs, plus Isaac Hayes on piano and the Memphis horns.

The Coasters' set is quintessential rock and roll, dance-oriented, full of fun with a broad anti-authoritarian streak. Cut in the mold of the great Louis Jordan, The Coasters combine a droll comic delivery with fine singing. Every one of their great hits is included here, along with

Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller. The Coasters' hit songs are subtle social commentaries often written in short-short story format. Leiber and Stoller were uncanny in their ability to capture aspects of black life in song form. The reaction of most black people to The Coasters is an instant smile or chuckle.

Leiber and Stoller went on to songs that celebrated youth, and thus was rock'n'roll born, progressing from an infatuation with black culture to a celebration of youth culture. Although they may not be the first group you think of, The Coasters produced by Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller were a defining element of rock'n'roll.

As far as modern pop is concerned, Longhair's music is a New Orleans abnormality. Yet it is an important uplink between boogie woogie and '50s R&B. In fact Fats Domino acknowledges without hesitation that Professor Longhair was one of the major influences on him and others.

Salvador

Continued from page 11

has been a 70 percent rise in the cost of living since the decree was implemented.

The most chilling restriction is the law defining the state of siege giving security forces and military courts untrammelled power to arrest and hold people on suspicion of "subversion." According to Article 11 of decree 507, a person is subject to arrest for treason for membership in an organization "that has issued statements that harm public order or state security or incite to acts that could damage the national economy."

Union leaders interpret the provision as being a strike ban, since any union meeting to discuss strike action would come under the decree's wording. The decree hit all unions hard, although it was aimed especially at the large union umbrella organizations—such as FEN-ASTRAS—that in the past attempted to organize coordinated national strike actions to pressure the government into reforms. In another blow to the possibility of strikes, the government in 1980 decreed the militarization of most major industries, including the electrical industry, in effect subjecting workers to military codes prohibiting desertion.

The union restrictions have short-circuited what appeared early in the Salvadoran conflict to be the left's most powerful weapon—the threat of a general strike. Strikes called in June and August 1980 were partially successful, but resulted in massive arrests and drove many leaders underground. A third general strike, called with minimal advance preparation in January 1981 to support the FMLN first general offensive, failed to appreciably hamper the government's military efforts in stopping the offensive.

A FUSS leader, in a semi-clandestine news conference, said he is not involved in party politics "much less the takeover

of the government." His union's goal is primarily economic reforms benefiting workers, which he said can only be achieved through a "pluralistic government" including the leftist FDR-FMLN.

Another FUSS leader added: "We don't want to sound like we are disassociating ourselves from the revolutionary call of the historic moment. We want to say that we are part of the revolutionary movement. We are part of the struggle to achieve the unity of all social groups."

The non-left unions have become in-

cording to several union leaders. "It is difficult to see the army as the ally of the workers," a CTS leader said. "Bodies are still always appearing. There has been more repression since the election, but they use different methods. Before the bodies appeared out there in the street, with the head cut off and tied to a pole to sow terror. Now, they throw the bodies off the cliffs."

In the first job action since the left-organized general strikes of 1980, 7,000 government workers staged a sit-down



A woman identifies photos of her slain son at the San Salvador legal aid office.

creasingly restive in the government camp, especially since the right parties won the March elections on platforms of dismantling the reforms that were the basis for the union support of the government in the first place. The alliance with the Christian Democrats has always been tenuous, because the Christian Democrats until now were a middle-class party with few activities in union mobilization.

The army traditionally was the arm of violence against union organizing, ac-

strike in June to demand six weeks of back wages. The wages were paid, to the encouragement of the union movement, whose leaders said they are hoping to test the limits of government tolerance with future actions.

"The UPD, to the extent the government weakens the reforms, is prepared to become active in opposition to the government," a UPD leader said.

Peasant leaders in the Salvadoran Communal Union (UCS) complained bitterly that the new government has turned over the agrarian reform agencies to the extreme right ARENA party, known as the party representing the old landowners displaced by the 1980 agrarian reform.

UCS leader Samuel Maldonado, one of the few leaders who allowed his name to be used, said he felt the unions should create their own political party through the UPD, rather than relying on the Christian Democrats to be their representatives in the government. He was deeply pessimistic about the elections that



A Salvadoran peasant

brought the right back to power. "I don't call this democracy," he said. "It doesn't do any good to have a constitutional government if you don't have justice."

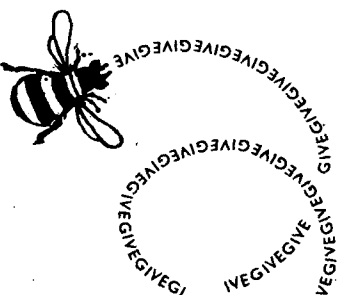
"We are in the middle. At some point you have to decide where you are going to go. To them (the oligarchy and the army)? I doubt it."

"To the other side (the left). Yes. Because they are the ones who try to do social justice, and the (oligarchy) never brings social justice."

In another interview, a labor organizer working in the government land-reform agency described the bureaucratic changes undertaken by the new ARENA leaders to undercut the implementation of reforms, including firing or demoting organizers like himself who believe in the reforms. "If the reforms are reversed, of 100 peasant beneficiaries, 20 or 30 will go over to fight with the guerrillas. I know it."

Maldonado made a similar warning if the reforms are stalled. "Then there will really be a civil war," he said.

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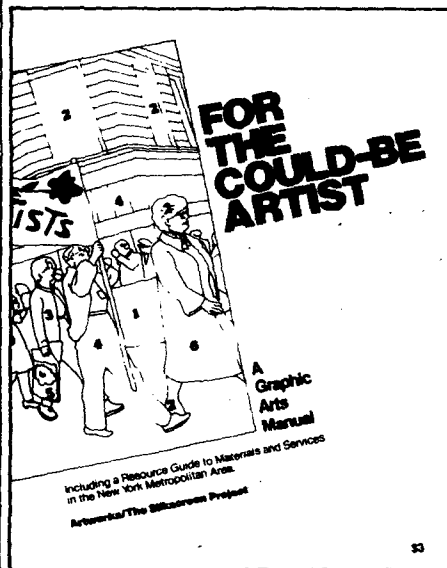
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August 27

Towards a Revitalized Left: DSA Chair Michael Harrington; Guillermo Ungo, President, FDR (El Salvador); William Winpisinger, President, IAM; and Barbara Ehrenreich, DSA Vice-Chair, will discuss prospects for the left in the 1980's. Sponsored by the Western Region of DSA. 8:00 p.m. Friday, Nourse Auditorium, 275 Hayes. For advance tickets or more information, call (415) 550-1849.

LOS ANGELES, CA

September 11

Peace Planning Workshop by DSA, Los Angeles Local. The morning session will review the key arguments for opposing the arms race and provide the critical information needed for the fall Bilateral Nuclear Weapons Freeze campaign. The afternoon session will consider past, present, and future mass movement activity to reverse the arms race, and the role of socialists in that effort. 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Socialist Community School, 2936 W. 8th St. For more information: (213)385-0650.

INDIANA, PA

October 21-23

Indiana University of Pennsylvania is sponsoring a conference "The Industrial North: The Future of Jobs, Productivity and Community." Participants include Staughton Lynd, Barry Bluestone, Jack Russell, Harley Shaiken, Jack Sheinkman, Stuart Butler (consultant to the Heritage Foundation), and Alfred Warren (vice president for industrial relations, General Motors). Contact Irwin Marcus, Department of History, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Indiana PA 15705 for additional details.

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Town without Fear



By John Brentlinger

VILLA SIN MIEDO, PUERTO RICO

There's a tradition in Puerto Rico of poor, landless people being called *rescatadores de terreno* land rescuers (they don't call themselves "squatters"). La Perla, in Old San Juan, is one of the oldest such communities. Another important one was in Santurce, adjoining San Juan, before it was destroyed for urban development. There are many others. The land rescue communities are a result of the poverty and unemployment created by various aspects of U.S. colonial control: the takeover and pollution of large land and fishing areas by high technology industry; huge corporate farms that are highly mechanized and produce for export; emphasis in construction on luxury hotels and condominiums, and middle-class housing; land speculation; and the U.S. military, whose bases occupy 17 percent of the island.

The small and middle-sized farms that used to provide the main work of the island and the bulk of the domestic food supply have been almost completely eliminated. Agriculture now uses less than 20,000 workers, in a labor force of more than a million. Even official statistics say 238,000 of those are unemployed. Formerly self-sufficient in food production, the island now imports 85 percent of its food from the U.S.

A problem of "over-population" emerges, and a welfare problem. Thirty-five percent of Puerto Rican women have been sterilized through government and foundation programs; 65 percent receive food stamps; 50,000 families are in line for government housing.

The Villa was founded in November 1980, when a group of homeless poor people occupied 65 acres of government land, about 20 miles east of San Juan. It was on Route 3, a four-lane road lined with U.S.-owned factories. The government had



been leasing the land to a farmer who supported 40 high-breed cattle on it. Soon it was supporting a community of 250 families with homes and gardens, a collective farm and a variety of services. They called it Villa sin Miedo—Town without Fear.

Miguel Gonzalez, a leader and spokesperson for the Villa, whose parents were rescuers in the Santurce community where he was born, explained the background of the Villa: "We have people here rescuing who lived in New York. A family might have sold their house and land and gone to the U.S.—in the '40s and '50s there was a big migration—and what they found there was prejudice, discrimination, insults, unemployment, welfare, drugs and no education.

"Now they are coming back because they got sick and tired of second-class treatment. They discover this land is not as small as they said it was, that this is Puerto Rico—the name says it, 'rich port.' There's nothing poor about Puerto Rico, it's the exploitation that's been going

on by the capitalistic system—that's what makes it bad. You read the papers and find out what's happened in Nicaragua, what happened in Cuba, and you come here and you see all the land going to waste.

"The government says the land is for the people, and that the government is for the people and by the people, and the people come down here and don't have a place to sleep and they want to cultivate it. They want to work the land."

The government fought Villa sin Miedo almost from the beginning. An eviction order was issued in March 1981. While it was being contested in the courts there were many police attacks. Houses were burned, electricity was cut off, and people who resisted the attacks were shot, gassed, jailed and beaten. Though rescuers' communities have been tolerated traditionally, in the Villa people were not just occupying land. They were also building their own schools, free health clinic and collective farm. Being in the Villa meant being taken care of by the Villa, and responsibility to work for, and contribute money to, the collective projects.

The Villa was widely discussed in Puerto Rico, and it became an issue between the two leading political parties—the New Progressive Party, pro-statehood and industrially-oriented, led by Gov. Romero; and the Popular Democratic Party (PDP), against statehood (though not independentist), historically connected to the countryside, with a majority in the legislature. The PDP, eager to embarrass Romero with the plight of the homeless, put a bill through the legislature ceding the land to the Villa. But the governor

Villa was destroyed in May. Special shock troops sealed the road and came in with helicopters and automatic weapons, bulletproof vests and phosphorous bombs. Gas was used to drive the people out without their possessions, and every house was burned. Bulldozers cleared the burned rubble and the gardens. Many were injured and 16 were jailed (bail totaled more than \$9 million). A policeman was killed. The residents were herded downtown and slept on the floor of the senate chambers, by invitation of the senate majority. After several moves they now have temporary use of church land while they raise money, with help from mainland support groups, for housing materials and land for a permanent settlement. The government has offered to place them in various housing projects, thus splitting them up. They are demanding compensation for their property losses, a return to the land, and that they all stay together.

When they talk about what Villa sin Miedo meant to them, the rescuers stress what they



vetoed it, saying the Villa was dominated by agitators and subversives. He noted that the "fanatic" Lolita Lebron and the Socialist leader Juan Mari Bras have visited the Villa. He expounded the "inviolable right to private property" and "the non-absolute right to housing," and castigated the opposition for their "irresponsible" support for lawbreakers.

After a year and a half, the

This do-it-yourself housing project in Puerto Rico means a lot more than shelter to the residents.

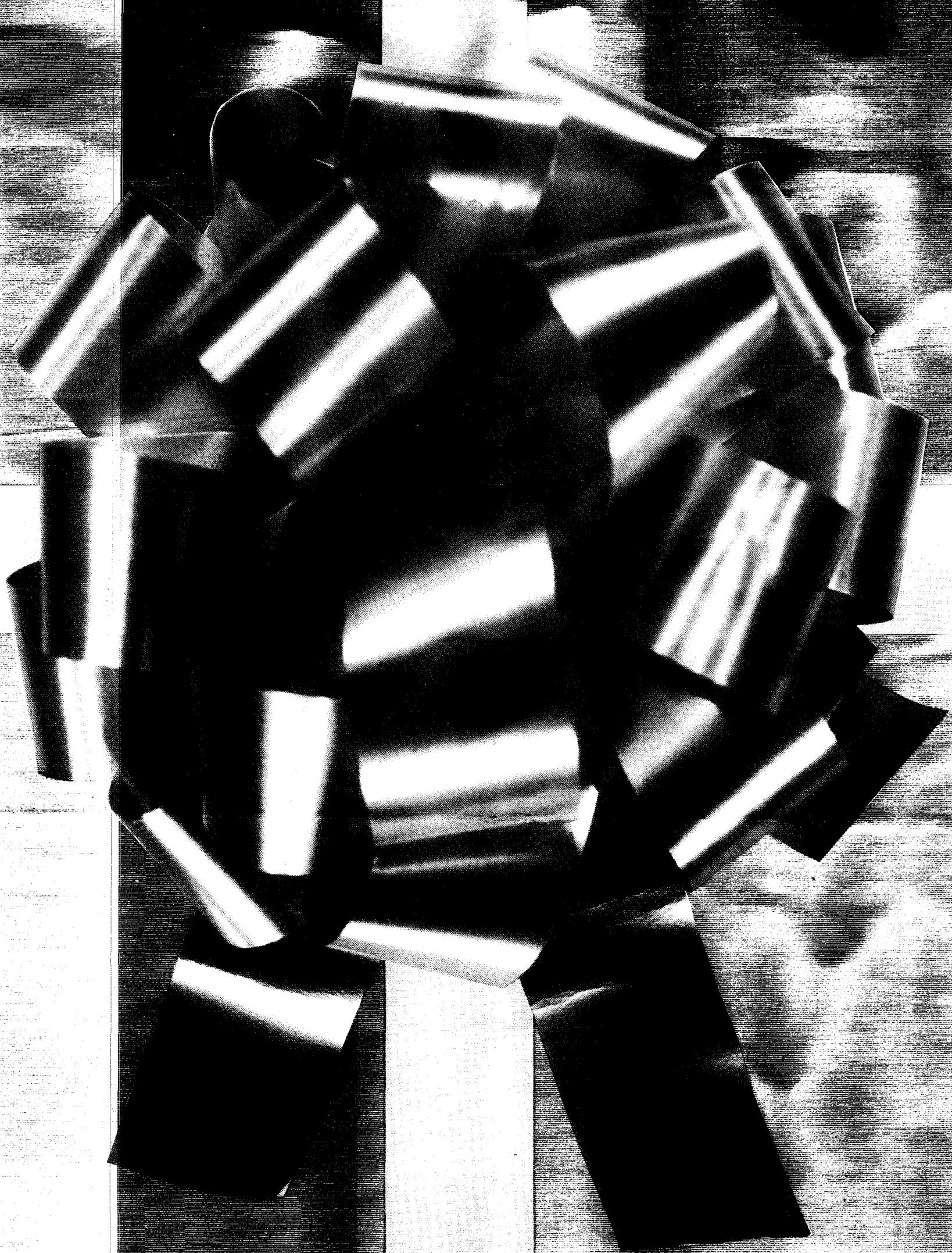
learned. They have learned they have many resources among themselves—nurses, farmers, carpenters, gardeners and plumbers. They have learned to use outside resources—the loan of a tractor for the farm, rental of a bulldozer for their roads, and medical, legal and agricultural expertise, from sympathetic intellectuals. They deeply appreciate the safety, health and security of their town, in contrast to life in Puerto Rico (which has the highest crime rate in the world). They speak much of giving and receiving, of never being refused, and the bond, the *conciencia* that had developed in the group.

Above all they talk of loving to work the land and grow their own food. One man told me he would go to his garden every morning at 4:30, to watch his plants and see if they were doing well. "They live too," he said. ■

John Brentlinger teaches philosophy at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.



Photographs:
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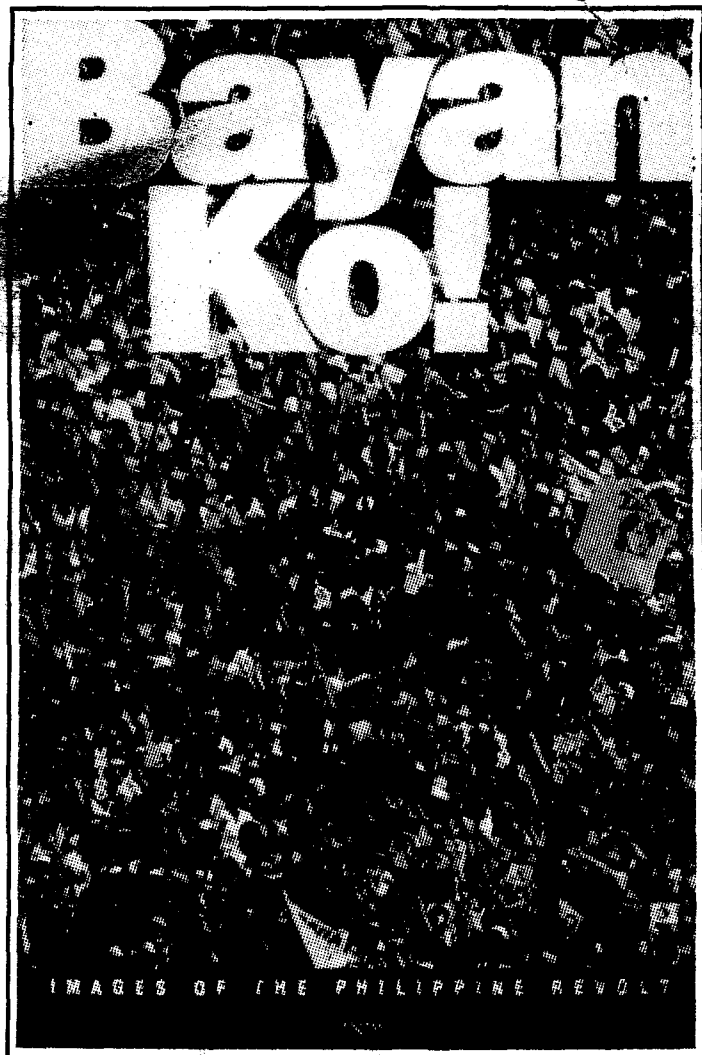
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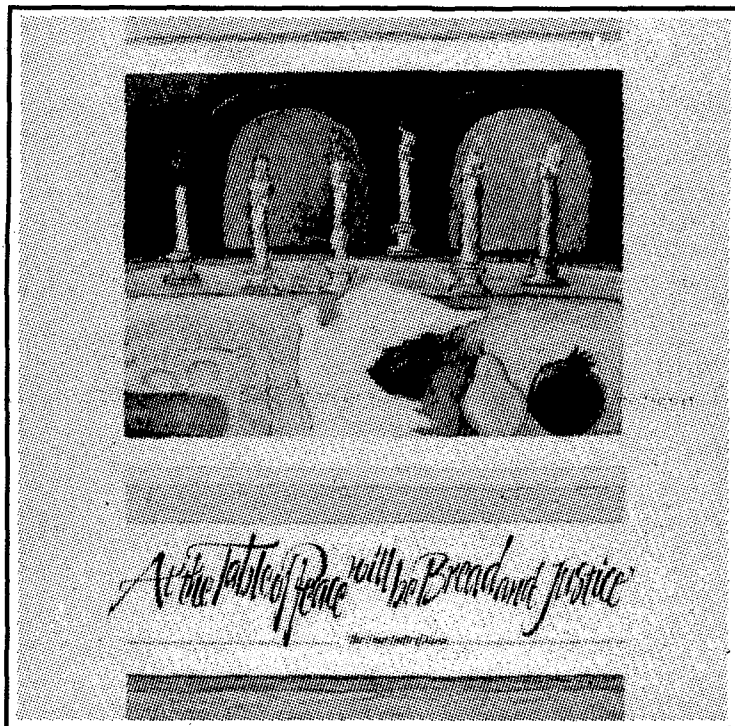
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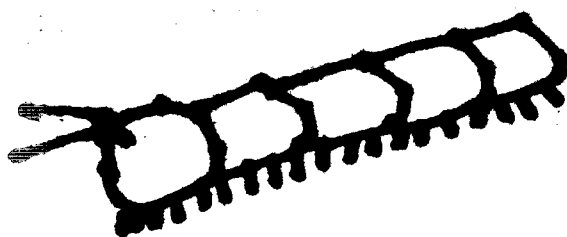
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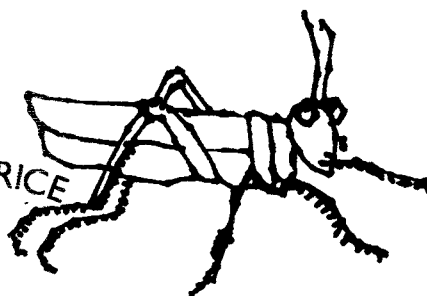
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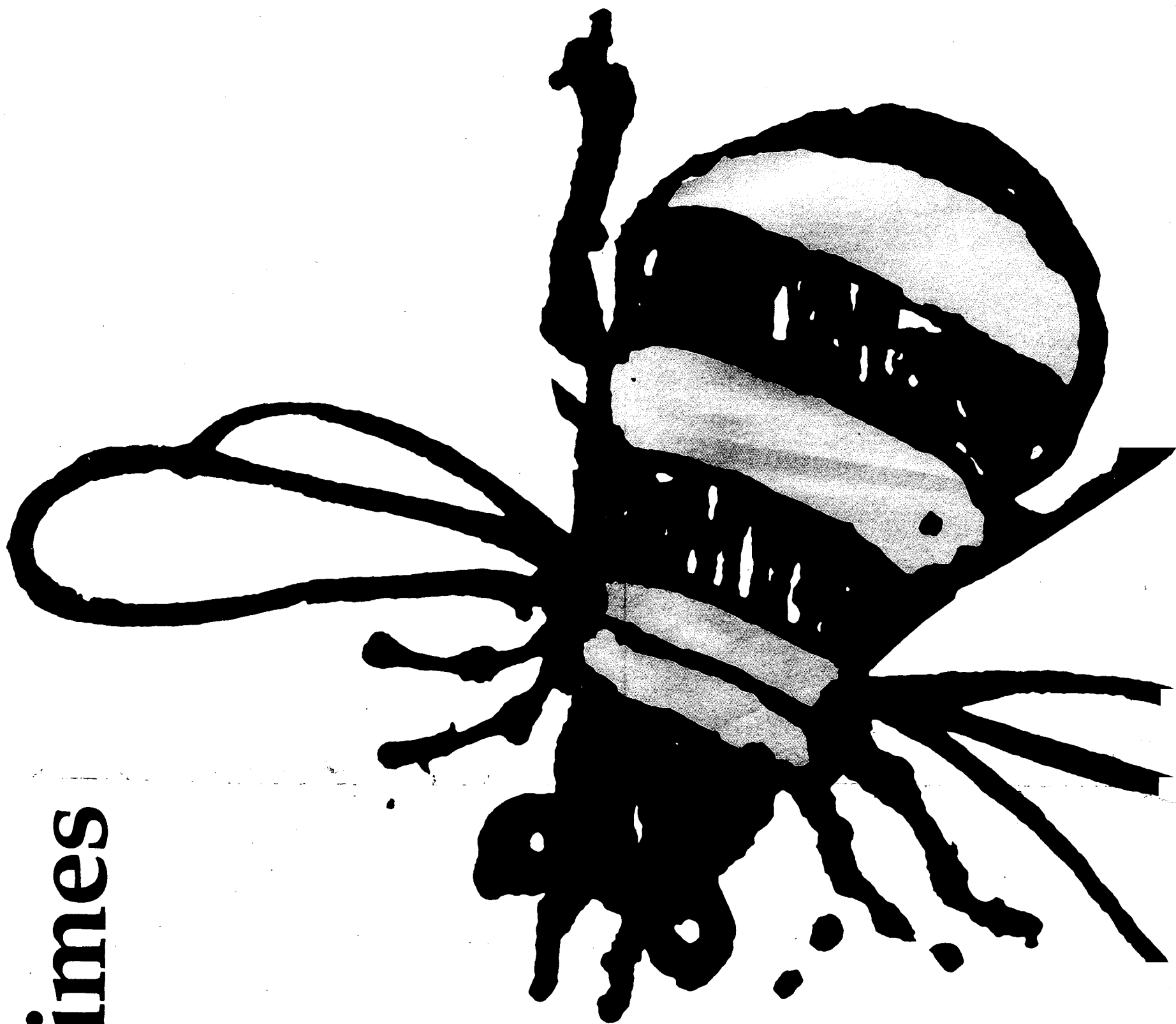
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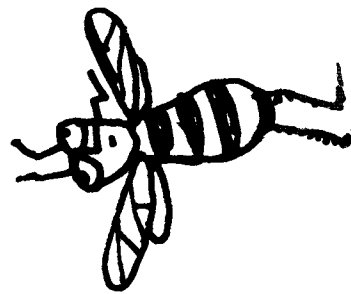
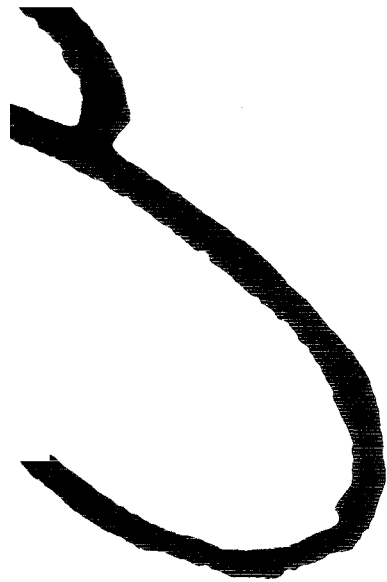


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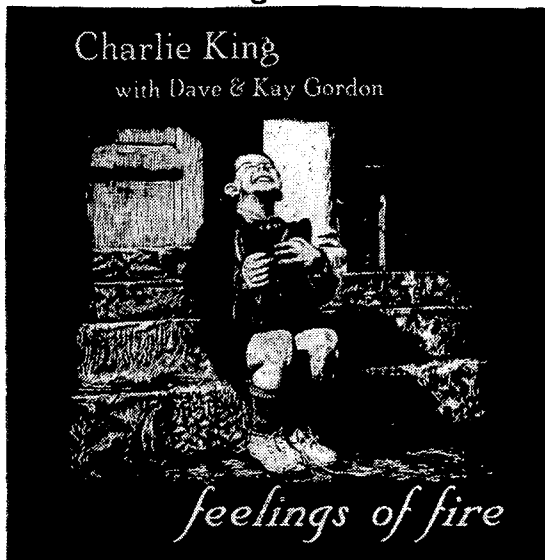
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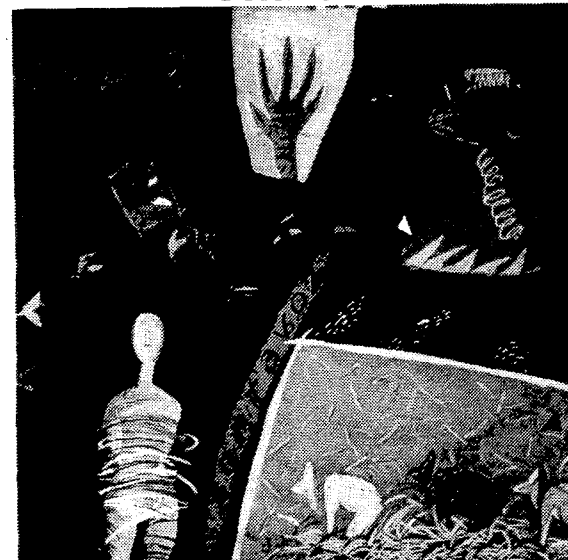
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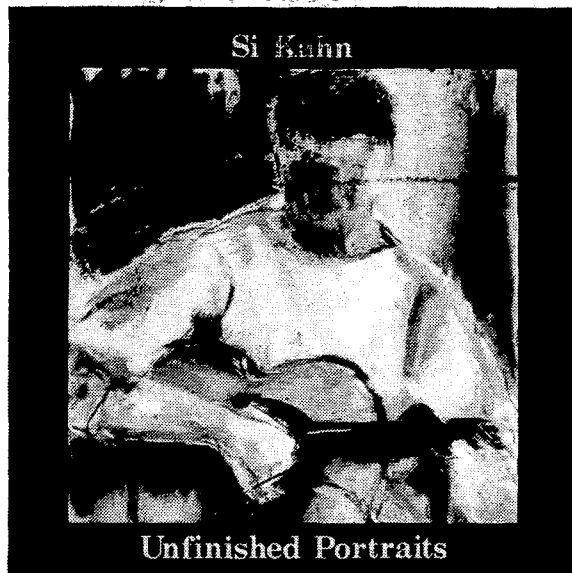
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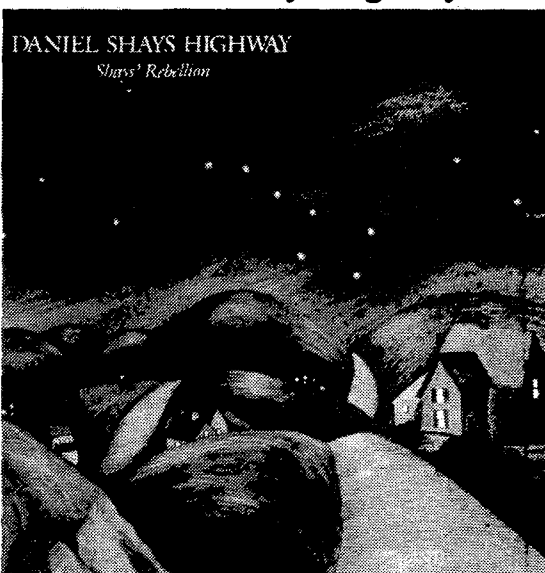
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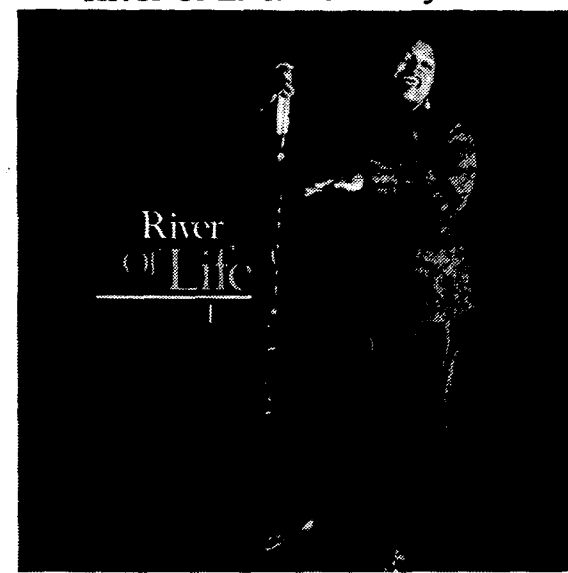
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